

**TASMANIAN
ABORIGINES AND MUTTONBIRDING:
A HISTORICAL EXAMINATION**

by

Irynej Skira M. Sc.

Submitted in fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of philosophy

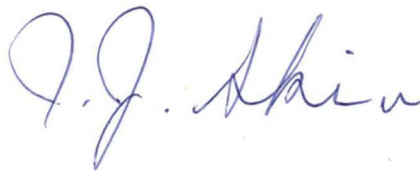
University of Tasmania

Hobart

September 1993

Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university and contains no copy or paraphrase of material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "I. J. Skira". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "I" and "J".

I. J. Skira

Authority of Access

This thesis may be made available for
loan and limited copying in
accordance with the *Copyright Act*
1968.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'I. J. Skira'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

I. J. Skira

CHOICE TASMANIAN MUTTON-BIRDS



Noreen Riddle carrying muttonbirds on Great Dog Island.
From a pamphlet issued by Tasmanian Freshfoods Pty. Ltd.,
c. 1955 (Source: Nancy Smith).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people made the completion of this thesis possible. In particular I thank my wife Peggy, for putting up with the isolation and occasional frustration. Initial encouragement to do this PhD came from Anna Navin, and the opportunity was realised through the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies. For that I thank them all. My supervisor Dr Peter Hay, gave me the motivation I required, and improved the drafts. I also thank Hans and Annie Wapstra for their comments.

To all the people who freely gave their time to reminisce about muttonbirding, I am very grateful; particularly to Marge Mansell and Phyllis Pitchford for their insights into Aboriginal customs and former way of life on Cape Barren Island, while also providing further contacts to interview. I also thank all the people who allowed me to photograph them working or enjoying their time on the muttonbird islands, including Michael Mansell, and who gave me the opportunity to observe the traditions of muttonbirding.

Visiting Mrs Nancy Smith of Launceston was always a joy. Her permission to review her husbands' records of C. H. Smith and Co., and the archival records of one of Australia's oldest shipping chandlers, added a dimension to this story which was previously missing.

For providing hospitality around Tasmania I thank Lynn Grey, Frank O'Reilly, Phyllis Pitchford, Sandra Reid and Derek Smith.

The staff from the Tasmanian State Archives and University of Tasmania in Hobart, Flinders Island Council, Latrobe Library in Melbourne, Mitchell Library in Sydney, The Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and National Library in Canberra, were most helpful.

Finally, a special thanks to the Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders for financial support to visit mainland Australia institutions.

ABSTRACT

The Tasmanian muttonbird, scientifically called the short-tailed shearwater *Puffinus tenuirostris* probably obtained its name because its flesh tasted like mutton. Over 80 percent of the world's population of 23 million birds breed in Tasmania, with the largest rookeries on the islands of Bass Strait. The bird has an egg-laying season of remarkable constancy enabling commercial exploitation to be carried out to a strict calendar. The term "muttonbirding" defines the capture of the bird, its killing and its processing into a product fit for human consumption.

The remains of muttonbirds have been found in archaeological sites in Tasmania and mainland Australia, but the meagre number present suggests that the birds were not an important food source to the Aborigines.

In 1798 the seal colonies of Bass Strait were discovered and exploited by non-Aboriginal sealers to near extinction. The sealers who remained took Aboriginal women for "wives". The population grew slowly, based on a subsistence muttonbird economy. By 1872 the descendants of white sealer-Aboriginal women liaisons constituted just 40 percent of the total 274 people in the Furneaux Group, as immigrants took up leases of islands once occupied by the descendants and eventually forced them onto Cape Barren Island. The area they settled on Cape Barren Island was declared a Reserve in 1881, and became an enclave requiring laws and government money to administer. Having very little income, the annual harvesting of muttonbirds was the highlight of the year to these people.

The immigrant settlers also looked to muttonbirding to sustain them through hard times, and to pay off mortgagees. By the early 1900s up to 400 people participated in the annual season. In the 1920s, catches of up to one million birds were recorded. Such a locally important industry required regulations to be frequently gazetted to conserve the birds, for administrative purposes, and to bring about hygiene in the presentation of the muttonbird for human consumption. The industry enticed some people into believing that they could make much money by buying and selling birds, even as recently as the 1980s. All such enterprises collapsed. Nowadays, the total catch is approximately 150,000 birds annually, with the largest number coming from islands in northwest Tasmania.

In recent years there have been protests against the taking of muttonbirds by amateur muttonbirders as people have become more environmentally conscious. These protests resulted in the closure of many traditional rookeries around Tasmania, but left the industry unscathed.

The future of the industry largely lies in the hands of the young generation of muttonbirders. As long as there are people who believe strongly in the tradition of muttonbirding, and people who will eat muttonbirds, there will probably be an industry. The short length and ready accessibility of nesting burrows, easy landings, and the close proximity of the resource to human settlements are the main reasons why the industry existed and has persisted in Tasmania.

CONTENTS

Frontispiece	
Acknowledgments	(i)
Abstract	(ii)
List of tables	(ix)
List of figures	(xi)
List of plates	(xii)
List of appendices	(xiv)
Introduction	(xv)
CHAPTER 1. The Tasmanian Muttonbird	1
The Term Muttonbird	2
Ecology of the Muttonbird	5
Evolution	6
Distribution and Abundance	8
Migration	9
Feeding	15
Breeding Biology	16
Mortality	19
Summary	20
CHAPTER 2. Exploitation of Muttonbirds by Non-Europeans	22
Northwest Tasmania	24
Cave Bay Cave, Hunter Island	24
Muttonbird Midden, Hunter Island	26
Rookery Rockshelter, Hunter Island	26
Stockyard Site, Hunter Island	26
Little Duck Bay, Hunter Island	28
Southwest Tasmania	28
Maatsuyker Island and Louisa Bay	28
Australian Mainland	31
Great Glennie Island	31
Captain Stevenson's Point	31
Gabo Island	31
Burrill Lake	32
Currarong	32

Durras North	33
Bass Point	33
Seton	33
Aboriginal Exploitation, Post 1803	34
Exploitation Around the World	36
New Zealand	36
Northern Hemisphere	37
Discussion and Summary	38
CHAPTER 3. Explorers and Sealers	42
Early European Contact	43
The Sealers	47
Sealers and Aboriginal Women	50
The Beginning of Permanent Settlement	53
Visitors to the Islands	55
The Visit of John Boulton, 1824	55
The Visits of James Backhouse and George Walker, 1832	57
George Augustus Robinson and the Sealers	58
Early European Impact upon the Fauna of the Bass Strait Islands	60
Summary	61
CHAPTER 4. Demographic Changes in the Furneaux Group, From 1840 to Present	63
Aboriginality	64
Demographic Change from 1840 to 1860	64
Demographic Change from 1860 to 1870	67
The Visit of John Thomas, Surveyor, 1861	67
The Visits of Archdeacon Thomas Reibey, 1862-1866	69
Demographic Change from 1870 to 1890	70
Non-Aboriginal Immigration	70
The Visits of Canon Marcus Brownrigg, 1872-1885	72
Demographic Change from 1890 to 1900	74
The Visits of Bishop Montgomery, 1891-1901	74
Demographic Change from 1900 to 1920	76
Demographic Change from 1920 to Present	79
Summary	82

CHAPTER 5. Alienation of Land	84
Tenure from 1848 to 1860	85
The Visits of Surveyor-General Power	85
Tenure from 1860 to 1870	89
A Decade of Loss	89
Tenure from 1870 to 1890	94
Focus on Cape Barren Island	94
Tenure from 1890 to 1910	98
The Opening up of Flinders Island	98
Tenure from 1910 to Present	100
The Cape Barren Island Reserve Acts of 1912 and 1945	100
Summary	106
 CHAPTER 6. Social Changes among the Aboriginal Population	108
Education	108
The First Attempt	108
The Second Attempt	111
The Third Attempt	111
The Final Attempt	112
Churchmen and their Perceptions of the Aborigines	114
Canon Brownrigg	114
Bishops Bromby and Sandford	116
Bishop Montgomery	117
The Boat Builders	120
Living Under the Cape Barren Island Reserve Acts, of 1912 and 1945	125
The Yacca Gum Industry	134
The Last Forty Years	136
Protection to Assimilation	136
Aboriginality Asserted	138
Aborigines and the Law	140
Return of Aboriginal Remains and the Push for Land Rights	143
Summary	146
 CHAPTER 7. The Muttonbird Industry, 1803-1900	148
The Muttonbird Islands	148
Muttonbirding to 1850	152
Muttonbirding from 1850 to 1900	156
Observations of the Early Missionaries	156

Observations of Canon Brownrigg	161
Observations of Bishop Montgomery	163
Summary	171
 CHAPTER 8. The Muttonbird Industry, 1900-1928	 173
Muttonbirding from 1900 to 1910	174
Season Details	176
Thomas Barrett's Store on Long Island	179
Muttonbirding from 1910 to 1915	181
Disease and Hygiene	182
The Canning of Muttonbirds	184
Muttonbirding from 1915 to 1928	185
Summary	191
 CHAPTER 9. The Muttonbird Industry, 1928-1955	 193
Muttonbirding from 1928 to 1940	194
The Animals and Birds Protection Act, 1928	194
The Holloways and Ownership of Sheds in the 1930s	195
Resumption of Freehold Land on Babel Island	200
The Annual Catch of Muttonbirds	201
A Second Attempt at Canning Muttonbirds	206
Snakes	209
Fire	212
Muttonbirding from 1940 to 1950	214
Shipping Around the Islands	216
Some Problems for the Muttonbirders	219
The Transit Hut	222
Muttonbirding from 1950 to 1955	224
Research on Muttonbirds	228
Children and Muttonbirding	233
Summary	235
 CHAPTER 10. C. H. Smith and Co., A Muttonbird Buyer	 237
From First Interest in the Furneaux Group to the 1930s	238
Island Stores	241
Buyers of Muttonbirds for C. H. Smith and Co.	245
The Latter Years	255
Summary	256

CHAPTER 11. The Muttonbird Industry since 1955	258
Muttonbirding from 1955 to 1960	259
The Government Muttonbird Sheds	264
Muttonbirding from 1960 to 1970	268
Muttonbirding from 1970 to Present	269
Department of Parks, Wildlife and Heritage	269
The Demise of Babel Island	273
Aboriginal Requests for Muttonbirding Rights	274
Summary	276
 CHAPTER 12. Muttonbirding in Northwest Tasmania	 278
Trefoil Island	279
Walker and Robbins Islands	286
Three Hummock Island	289
Steep (Steep Head) Island	290
Hunter Island	291
New Year Island	293
Summary	295
 CHAPTER 13. Muttonbirding, Present and Future	 297
Current Muttonbirding Practices and Routines	298
Socio-Economic Factors	305
Amateur Muttonbirding and Public Opinion: their Effect on the Industry	308
Summary and Conclusion	310
 REFERENCES	 314
Books and Articles	314
Tasmanian Parliamentary Papers	339
Acts of Parliament	341
Theses	342
Manuscript Material	343
Interviews	348
Abbreviations	349
 Appendices	 350

List of Tables

Table 1	Occurrence of muttonbirds and other seabirds in excavated middens in Tasmania.	25
Table 2	Occurrence of muttonbirds and other seabirds in excavated middens on the Australian mainland.	32
Table 3	Population Statistics for the Furneaux Group from 1870 to 1991 (Source: 1870-1901, TPP; 1911-1991, Australian Bureau of Statistics).	71
Table 4	Purchasers of the first sale of crown land on Flinders Island in 1889 and 1890 according to ethnic background (Source: AOT TRE 21/5; names are shown as written in TRE 21/5).	99
Table 5	Area of crown land sold on Flinders Island from the first year, 1889 (Source: Lands and Surveys Department Annual Reports).	101
Table 6	First written record of muttonbird rookeries on islands in Bass Strait.	149
Table 7	Area of muttonbird rookeries exploited for commercial purposes in the 1980s.	151
Table 8	Muttonbird statistics for the Furneaux Group (Furn. Group) in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (2.5 tons of feathers were also gathered in 1831).	160
Table 9	Description of muttonbird seasons, 1875-1928.	166
Table 10	Number of muttonbird licences issued, 1907-1919 (Source: Lands and Surveys Department Annual Reports).	176
Table 11	Log entries for the <i>Shearwater</i> during the 1949 muttonbird season (Source: Francis Rhodes, Flinders Island).	218

Table 12	Monetary value of muttonbirds bought by C. H. Smith & Co., 1911-1925 (Source: C. H. Smith and Co. Account Journals).	240
Table 13	Number of muttonbirds caught commercially and exported to New Zealand, 1980-1992 (Source: PWH W2/5/7).	272
Table 14	Details of muttonbird cargoes in northwest Tasmania.	283
Table 15	Monetary value of the 1985 commercial muttonbird season (Source: Skira 1987: 70).	306

List of Figures

Figure 1	Location of place names in Bass Strait and mainland Australia.	10
Figure 2	Location of muttonbird rookeries and place names in Tasmania.	11
Figure 3	Location of place names in the Furneaux Group.	12
Figure 4	Location of place names in the Hunter Group.	13
Figure 5	Seasonal composition of muttonbirds at rookeries according to age categories (after Serventy 1967: 174).	17
Figure 6	Distribution of all Tasmanian Aboriginal site types recorded up to September 1983 (Source: Archaeology Branch, PWH).	23
Figure 7	Variation in number of males (—) 20 years and over, on Cape Barren Island, and percentage of these whose occupation was listed as labourer (---) (Source: Commonwealth Electoral Rolls).	78
Figure 8	Diagrammatic representation of a cutter, ketch and two-mast schooner (after Anonymous 1987: 22-23).	121
Figure 9	Annual muttonbird seasons from 1892-1917. Scale: 1, exceptionally poor season; 2, below average; 3, average; 4, above average; 5, exceptionally good.	167
Figure 10	Location of numbered sites on Babel Island.	252
Figure 11	Location of numbered sites on Great Dog, Little Dog and Little Green Islands.	260

List of Plates

Plate 1	Earliest known depiction of the Tasmanian muttonbird. Watercolour painting by William Ellis in the far North Pacific in August 1778 (Reproduced by permission of the British Museum of Natural History, London).	3
Plate 2	Watercolour painting by Bishop Nixon of sealers' settlement on Gun Carriage Island in 1854 (Source: Allport Library, Hobart).	66
Plate 3	One of the first photographs of Aborigines in the Furneaux Group, taken by Rev Fereday on Chappell Island in March 1862. From left: Harry Beedon, his wife Sarah Everett, his sister Lucy Beedon, and his brother James Beedon (Source: AOT).	66
Plate 4	Funeral of Phillip Thomas on Cape Barren Island in 1915. Born in 1831, Thomas was the last of the first generation Aborigines when he died (Source: Mabel Brown).	81
Plate 5	Darcy Maynard, born in 1903, the oldest Aborigine on Cape Barren Island in 1993 (Source I. Skira).	81
Plate 6	The ketch, <i>Linda</i> . Launched on Great Dog Island in 1887, it traded between Launceston and the Furneaux Group until 1929, when it capsised in the Tamar River at Launceston (Source: Queen Victoria Museum, Launceston).	124
Plate 7	Aboriginal activist, Michael Mansell, with muttonbirders on Great Dog Island in April 1991. At back from left: Vivian Beeton and Ray Gardner. Front from left: Dyan Shaw, Ronnie Summers, Joe Phegan, Michael Mansell and Chris Mansell (Source: I. Skira).	145
Plate 8	Boat Harbour at Chappell Island in December 1893 (Source: <i>Australasian</i> 30 December 1893).	164

Plate 9	Aborigines collecting muttonbird eggs on Chappell Island in December 1893 (Source: <i>Australasian</i> 30 December 1893).	164
Plate 10	The <i>Rawlinna</i> , bought by C. H. Smith and Co. for the muttonbird trade in the Furneaux Group (Source: Nancy Smith).	242
Plate 11	Part of Island Stores complex at Lady Barron on Flinders Island (Source: Nancy Smith).	242
Plate 12	Pamphlet issued by Jack Cruse on the packing and handling of muttonbirds (Source: C. H. Smith and Co. files).	249
Plate 13	Rodney Newell carrying in muttonbirds on a spit on Great Dog Island, March 1990 (Source: I. Skira).	302
Plate 14	Rodney Newell plucking muttonbirds on Great Dog Island, March 1990 (Source: I. Skira).	302
Plate 15	In the scalding room on Steep Island in April 1988. From left: David Sainty and Doug Lowery (Source: I. Skira).	303
Plate 16	Joe Conti, health inspector, holding a freshly cleaned muttonbird on Great Dog Island in 1991 (Source: I. Skira).	303

List of Appendices

Appendix 1	Population statistics for Cape Barren Island, 1909-1984. The * shows the number of adults on the electoral roll in the Furneaux Group (Source: Commonwealth electoral rolls).	350
Appendix 2	Number of muttonbird sheds in the Furneaux Group, 1922- 1992 (Source: <i>Examiner</i> 22 March 1922; FIC Correspondence Files.1925-29; AOT AA 612/21-24 and PWH W2/5/7).	352
Appendix 3	Number of muttonbirds caught in the Furneaux Group, 1925-1992 (Source: AOT AA 612/21-24 and PWH W2/5/7).	354
Appendix 4	Number of muttonbirds caught in the Hunter Group, 1941- 1992 (Source: AOT AA 612/21-24 and PWH W2/5/7).	356
Appendix 5	Quantity of byproducts collected from muttonbirds in the Furneaux Group, 1937-1992 (Source: AOT AA 612/21-24 and PWH W2/5/7).	358

INTRODUCTION

The Setting

If a person today took a trip in April to the islands in Bass Strait, that stretch of water separating Tasmania from continental Australia, they would find about one hundred people, mostly Aborigines, earning a living from their tradition of catching muttonbirds, otherwise known as the short-tailed shearwater. The present day Aborigines are the descendants of the original, tribal-born women (whose people possessed the island of Tasmania when Europeans arrived), and the European sealers who remained in Bass Strait once the seals were virtually exterminated after 1810. Muttonbirding, as it is known, is a unique way of life as the catching of seabirds on such a large scale at the present time does not occur anywhere else in the world (Skira 1987:71; 1990:77). The processing procedure and its associated terminology has not been duplicated elsewhere, and present day muttonbirding practices are remarkably similar to those adopted early last century when muttonbirding began for commercial purposes. The musty smell of the birds pervades the whole atmosphere on the islands. It is not offensive but its presence brings to mind everything connected with the history and tradition of muttonbirding.

For the participants, the five week season is an opportunity to meet friends and family not seen since the previous year. Everyone looks eagerly forward to the next season. Kim Stonehouse is one of seven operators on Great Dog Island who share a potential harvest of almost half a million muttonbird chicks. Once he arrives on the island, he says, "First thing you do is take a big lung full of air, to smell the birds in the rookery" (Kim Stonehouse interview). Financially, muttonbirding is important to him and other Aborigines because it provides an opportunity to accumulate additional money, to buy items household goods or pay off debts. As one muttonbirder said, "You work five weeks for that money, she's gone in a couple of days".

Commercial muttonbirding occurs only in Tasmania. The meat is sold for human consumption, and the by-products of feathers for bedding, and the oil for medicinal and food additives. The harvest revolves around the processing shed where the birds are cleaned. An operator, also called the shed boss, employs catchers for gathering birds and shed hands to process them.

People had been writing about muttonbirds before Australia was first settled by Europeans in 1788. The Russian geographer Stephen Krascheninnikow mentioned

seeing them near the Kurile Islands in 1761 (Dementiev and Gladkova 1951: 371). Nearly 30 years later, settlers on Norfolk Island, 600 km east of Brisbane, were saved from starvation by petrels. The word 'muttonbird' was coined because one of the species consumed, the wedge-tailed shearwater *Puffinus pacificus*, was said to be remarkably fat, and the taste of its meat resembled that of sheep. The term soon became applied to the short-tailed shearwater *P. tenuirostris*, and today is confined to the short-tailed shearwater in Australia, and to the sooty shearwater *P. griseus* in New Zealand which the indigenous Maoris collect for food (Campbell and Lack 1985: 372). The Tasmanian muttonbird is a member of the Procellariiformes, an order with many species that are long-lived and breed socially in large rookeries. This makes them easy to exploit (Serventy *et al.* 1971: 44).

People have never failed to be amazed by the muttonbird's great abundance. Observers used to say that night fell early on muttonbird rookeries (Davies 1846: 13). One indication of their huge numbers is given by the early maritime explorer, Matthew Flinders, who in 1798 estimated one flock off northwest Tasmania at 151,500,000 birds. Today approximately 23 million birds breed in about 250 rookeries that occur mainly on offshore islands in southeastern Australia. Tasmania contains some 80 percent of the population with 9.4 million breeding pairs in 181 rookeries covering an area of 1522 ha (Skira *et al.* 1986: 225). The most abundant rookeries are in the Furneaux Group, of which Babel Island, with 2.86 million burrows is the largest (Towney and Skira 1985a: 103).

The muttonbird can be killed in its hundreds of thousands annually and still thrive as a species simply because it is so abundant, and this thesis will illustrate that while the numbers of muttonbird harvesters may have decreased in recent years, muttonbirds have been in such great abundance that they formed and still form the basis of community life in the Bass Strait islands. Muttonbirding is an example of wildfowling by indigenous people, which in the case of the Bass Strait Aborigines was in the past directly linked through a 'bush economy' to their socio-economic and cultural development, but in the present has become a 'cottage industry' whilst retaining, nevertheless, a cultural importance. In this thesis, I also place the social history of the Aborigines and the central place of muttonbirding in that history, in the context of what was happening to non-Aboriginal islanders and also to the general Tasmanian population. In this way I aim to provide a framework within which to judge statistics provided about Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, and the extent to which characteristics of the Aboriginal way of life might indeed be those of Bass Strait islanders in general. Later, I relate muttonbirding to

the more general literature on wildfowling by indigenous people, despite the almost complete lack of information on the socio-economic aspects of this activity.

An analysis of the social structure of the communities that lived on the Bass Strait islands for most of the nineteenth and part of the twentieth centuries reveals a subsistence bush economy that forged cooperative management, evolved generalist skills such as boat building, and emphasised the integration of work with the local culture. A subsistence economy is said to lie at the heart of native cultures, and provides native people with generational continuity (Robinson and Ghostkeeper 1987: 138). The present day Aboriginal people of Tasmania view the contemporary muttonbird industry as one of their major social, cultural and economic activities (Anonymous 1986; Brown 1992). Thus muttonbirding has been described as:

...a traditional seasonal activity, with origins in the pre-history of Tasmania which developed into an annual happening of significant importance to the Aboriginal communities in Tasmania (TPP 1978. Number 14: 16).

Muttonbirding by Aborigines pre-European Contact

At the time of European contact, the total Aboriginal population of Tasmania was probably about 4,000 people, organised into nine tribes. They had been in occupation for over 30,000 years (Allen *et al.* 1988: 75). The Aborigines were a hunter/gatherer people whose technology was simple and adequate to enable successful adaptation to the wide range of Tasmanian environments. Their economy was marine orientated for at least certain periods of the year, and the coast was visited by every tribe at some stage of its seasonal movements. Their food sources can be discerned through surveying archaeological sites, particularly middens (Bowdler 1984; Vanderwal and Horton 1984). These surveys provide a measure of past distribution, species composition and abundance of the fauna, knowledge of the diet of the people and cultural preferences, all of which emphasise the impact of prehistoric people on the natural environment (Olson 1982: 162; Yesner 1976: 263).

Tribal Aborigines had several distinct names for the muttonbird (Plomley 1976: 151-152). 'Yolla', seems to have been the most commonly used, and present day Aborigines have in the last two years taken it up as the preferred word to 'muttonbird'. In particular, Aborigines from the northwest tribes looked forward to gathering the birds from nearby islands, timing their return by the flowering in September of blackwood trees *Acacia*

melanoxydon (Robinson 1966: 633). The islands also had large numbers of wallabies and seals that the Aborigines hunted. The coastal food resources exploited by Aborigines in Tasmania and southeastern mainland Australia have been fully described by archaeologists (Bowdler 1984; Gaughwin 1978; Lampert 1971). The importance of muttonbirds in relation to other food resources, and the current distribution of rookeries, which may have been different in the past, are examined and discussed.

The Arrival of the Sealers

The muttonbird islands referred to in this thesis lie in western and eastern Bass Strait (Figure 3). The western islands in the Hunter Group are smaller than those in the Furneaux Group in eastern Bass Strait, and were never permanently inhabited but used for grazing stock, occasionally supplemented by muttonbirding when in season. The social history of muttonbirding is therefore largely the story of the people in the Furneaux Group, particularly those who resided on Cape Barren Island. Cape Barren Island is the central of the 3 major islands with another 50 smaller ones comprising the Furneaux Group. Of considerable size, Cape Barren Island is 40 km wide and 24 km at its broadest extent, and rises to well over 700 m. It is two thirds the size of Flinders Island, the largest of the three main islands. The first settlement in Tasmania was established on the south side of Cape Barren Island in Kent Bay when Charles Bishop set up his sealing operations there in 1798. The Furneaux Group had last been occupied approximately 6,000 years ago (Sim 1989: 25). The muttonbird islands lie just to the north and south of Cape Barren Island, with Babel Island located midway along the east coast of Flinders Island.

By 1810 seals had become uneconomic to exploit by the large sealing gangs set up by Sydney based entrepreneurs. The islands were deserted except for itinerant sealers working on their own account, but by the mid-1820s several small islands in the Furneaux Group had been permanently settled. The sealers eked out a living through selling or bartering to passing ships whatever produce they could catch or grow, and also to get "grog for skins" (Boulton 1986: 13). The Cape Barren Island-descended Aborigines, the ancestors of the majority of Aborigines in Tasmania today, derive from tribal Aboriginal women who associated with some twelve sealers of European origin (Tindale 1952: 4). Hardened by their sealing trade, the sealers for the most part ill-treated their women and made them little more than slaves (Plomley 1966, 1987; Plomley and Henley 1990). Affection only appeared after the islands had long been settled, and the sealers had softened in their older age.

When George Augustus Robinson relocated mainland Tasmanian Aborigines to Wybalenna on Flinders Island in the early 1830s (Plomley 1966, 1987), a rudimentary community was already well established on the small islands. Robinson termed the sealers and their families 'Straitsmen' or 'Islanders'. For many years the descendants were called 'half-castes', never 'Aborigines'. In recent years the descendants have reasserted themselves, and the term Aborigine is a modern classification for any person who is descended from the liaisons of this small pool of white sealer and tribal born Aboriginal woman. To contemporary Aborigines searching for their Aboriginality the mixed nature of their ancestry is of less importance than the direct blood link with the people who had inhabited Tasmania for thousands of years (Sculthorpe 1978: 6).

The sealers originated from Britain where the exploitation of seabirds and their eggs for human consumption dates to prehistory (Baldwin 1974: 61; Clark 1948: 116). In season the Manx shearwater *P. puffinus*, was sold in markets. This shearwater, which is slightly smaller than the Tasmanian muttonbird, breeds in the north of England, particularly on the Calf of Man and the Orkneys. A great number of young were taken each year by the people who farmed these islands (Serjeantson 1988: 212). They salted the birds in barrels for storage and, when boiled, ate them with potatoes. In the Orkneys, Manx shearwaters were also valued for their feathers. Adult birds were also taken but were "not so well tasted as the young" (Latham 1781-85 Vol. III: 406). Manx shearwaters were not the only seabirds of the Procellariidae to be harvested. In the Faroe Islands the little storm petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*, was utilised by the local inhabitants who were known to:

...draw a wick through the body, from the mouth to the vent; which when lighted, serves them for some time, burning like a lamp, being fed by the vast quantity of oil contained in the body of it, as well as other birds of this genus (Latham 1781-85 Vol. III: 412).

It is safe to conclude that the use of seabirds and other wildfowl was widespread throughout the northern hemisphere (Nelson 1907: 771; Williamson 1945: 258), and that some of the Furneaux Group sealers would have been aware of this usage. But why was such a strong reliance placed on muttonbirds when the islands were known and exploited for other abundant wildlife? The sealers sold wallaby skins, feathers from swan and other waterfowl, and burnt the natural saltbush vegetation for lime (Whinray 1981: 281). However, none were as abundant, as easy to catch, as reliable in terms of body condition, or as resistant to over-exploitation as muttonbirds. Additionally, the

birds provided by-products of feathers and oil which were initially more valuable than the meat itself.

Muttonbirding in the Nineteenth Century

By the second half of the nineteenth century, sealing had so declined that muttonbirding had become the economic mainstay in the Furneaux Group. In the early days feathers obtained from adult muttonbirds were the main product, and used for mattress fill. Apart from collecting adult birds to salt or smoke, the Islanders also collected eggs in November-December, and fledglings for their meat, oil and fat in March-April. For the most part exploitation during the nineteenth century was indiscriminate, wasteful and uncontrolled, and little thought was given to conservation. As the human population grew, huge numbers of muttonbirds and their rookeries were threatened by harvesting, clearing of land, and burning and grazing for farming. Several rookeries were obliterated. The muttonbird population survived only because of its great abundance, and the human population of 50 to 60 people in the mid-1850s was too small to bring about extinction through harvesting alone. There are very few figures for the number of birds caught in the nineteenth century, but it seems probable that less than 200,000 adults and chicks were taken annually. It was only in the first two decades of the twentieth century that catches as large as one million chicks per annum occurred, and these appear to have had no measurable effect on the population.

By 1850 the people in the Furneaux Group were spread over eight islands. The first intrusions on the island community were in this period. The discovery of what was thought to be 'guano' deposits on the islands brought about an influx of outsiders who quickly came to outnumber the Aborigines. The Islanders were dispossessed from the smaller islands to the extent that by 1883 outsiders leased 28 islands compared to only 1 by an Aborigine. The Aborigines' claim that they had a legitimate right to land because of their Aboriginal ancestry led the government to reserve 2,428 ha on the west side of Cape Barren Island in 1881. Paradoxically, this helped to ensure the survival of a core islander culture because it grouped them on one island. They were superb boatmen and during the latter part of the nineteenth century, the community developed a remarkable boat culture, shipbuilding industry and marine tradition. Strong community feelings also grew which, in a sense, were based on a shared fear of harassment by outsiders.

Many people, including government officials, did not understand the Aborigines and their particular social and economic needs. It was considered that the community needed intermediaries with the authorities, a role first gladly accepted by Church of England

missionaries, although their perceptions were clouded by the priority they gave to Christianising. We can chart the social and demographic changes from the missionaries' writings and those of other visitors (Brownrigg 1979; Nixon 1854; Montgomery in *Church News* 1890-1901; Thomas in Dorset 4 maps and reports: Mapping Branch, Department of Environment and Planning, Hobart). But acceptance of such patronage and dependence necessarily involved the diminution of self-respect and confidence, the only strengths the community had (Murray-Smith 1986: 216). Archdeacon Reibey, who made several visits in the 1860s, and Canon Brownrigg, who made annual voyages from 1872-85, both understood the significance of muttonbirding to the inhabitants, but never attempted to interfere with the harvest. On the other hand, Bishop Montgomery, who conducted annual trips from 1890 to 1901, became very interested in muttonbirds from a scientific and conservation viewpoint, and felt that they required protection because of perceived over-exploitation. On his initiative, the first muttonbird regulations were promulgated over people who had never before known government interference in their vital livelihood. They became upset, and because of this and other reasons, Montgomery, who once felt he had a special mission to the Aborigines, finally gave up on them.

The involvement of clergymen in island affairs is put into perspective in this thesis by examining other factors which influenced the Islanders including land tenure, growth of the population, and the lack of employment opportunities in areas other than muttonbirding. With one or two exceptions, the Aborigines were not skilled at dealing with outsiders. Their consistent lack of money always put them at a disadvantage with the Europeans, some of whom took advantage of the Aborigines for their own gain. Alcohol was a problem in the 1870s-80s. It was available from a number of sources, including from the only shop in the Furneaux Group in the 1870s, as well as from private individuals. The shop disguised its trade by selling alcohol under false names. The outcry from several prominent Aboriginal community leaders and Church of England clergy had negligible effect. When individual families lived on their own island, their poverty was not apparent to outsiders and perhaps not even to the people themselves. But grouped together on Cape Barren Island living conditions were manifestly sub-standard when compared with their European neighbours on the other islands. Some were so poor that one remarked he had not had any sugar in his tea for over one month, nor any money to buy any (*Examiner* 11 February 1896). Yet Bishop Montgomery, who in his first two visits was so impressed with the hospitality shown by the community, and so taken with their seemingly laidback lifestyle, despite the obvious poverty, wrote that:

Perhaps there is no part of Australasia where life can be lived so easily and inexpensively. Kangaroos, wallabys [sic], wild cattle and pigs, ducks and swans abound. The sea swarms with fish...a region where, in one sense, it is "always afternoon" (*Church News* 1 April 1891:444).

To the 100 or so Aborigines, muttonbirding was the sole means of economic survival from year to year. To the non-Aborigines, muttonbirding was probably not as important. Those who did participate were known as 'poor whites' (David Rhodes interview). Residing on Flinders Island for the most part, non-Aborigines had more opportunities to secure employment outside the muttonbird season.

Muttonbirding in the Twentieth Century

Reservation of part of Cape Barren Island in 1912 did not solve the problem of economic independence for the residents. For forty years Government officials attempted to run the Reserve under Acts of Parliament; and numerous reports were produced to look at the many problems and provide solutions. Attempts were made to persuade the community to develop agriculture blocks. Several muttonbird sheds were erected for Aborigines by the government but these ventures failed, for reasons not entirely the fault of the operators whom they were meant to benefit. By analysing life on the island in the 1920s through the many reports produced by governments, important questions are raised about how the community survived and maintained its distinctive culture.

In the 1930s labouring and hunting, including muttonbirding, were still the mainstays for the 200 Aborigines who made up almost one third of the total population of people in the Furneaux Group. So it was also for another 200 non-Aborigines from Flinders Island. Participants could plan knowing that the season dates, based on the biology of the bird, would not change. The steps in catching and processing the birds also had not changed since muttonbirding began. Additionally it was an activity in which the whole family could participate without the expense of employing outside labour. Young children to elderly adults could all find a task. Up to 58 sheds operated each season with 28 on Babel Island alone. Muttonbirding expanded because it was the only activity which potentially offered a regular annual income, albeit for only one month. Firms in Launceston and Flinders Island, and wealthier individuals on the islands, agreed to provide groceries and other items to muttonbirders in return for birds (Skira 1994: 165). This meant that the price for muttonbirds offered to the muttonbirder could be regulated to suit the trader, and that the muttonbirder also received groceries and other items at a disadvantaged price while the trader profited from the sale of the birds as well as that of

the goods. In the long term no one ever made profits from or built a profitable business on muttonbirding alone. In particular, Aborigines now found it difficult to make money, especially when they were forced by government regulations to upgrade sub-standard buildings to new health standards. To survive, the majority sold their sheds and worked as paid hands. My thesis examines the details of muttonbirding during this period to explain how exploitation of Aboriginal muttonbirders in particular, was a major contributing factor behind many of them leaving the islands to make a new life elsewhere.

At the commencement of World War II, Cape Barren Island was still the main home for the Aborigines. However, during and after the war, a large majority of the population left to seek work on Flinders Island and in Tasmanian mainland towns. Government welfare money and employment schemes held together the community on Cape Barren Island. In the period from 1940 to 1950, there were habitual offenders, with vagrancy a common charge for Aborigines who drifted between Cape Barren and Flinders Islands. By 1947 there were only 181 Aborigines in the Furneaux Group in a total population of 853. There now remain just 30 Aborigines on Cape Barren Island, but 8,948 descendants of the Islanders, or 2 percent of the total population of Tasmania, live within the general Tasmanian community (Australian Bureau of Statistics Census 1991).

The majority of present Aboriginal muttonbirders are over the age of 40 and were raised on Cape Barren Island. Traditionally the work involved is regarded as hard, hot and dirty. Most shed owners have workers of long standing whom they invite each year and who know that there is always a job for them in the same shed. For the last few years there have been 14 to 16 operators and about 40 catchers each season. Most of the people in the industry are Aborigines, whether they are shed owners, catchers or shed hands. For the rest of the year, the majority are unemployed, living off welfare cheques. What future the industry has is a question that few muttonbirders want to face. Most hold no hope for it because of their disillusionment with the younger generation. This feeling is particularly strong among middle-aged Aboriginal participants. Others see a conflict of lifestyle between western and Aboriginal cultures. Furley Gardner, an elder in the Aboriginal community in Tasmania, still has hope: "I don't think it will ever die out but the way like things today like taxation, employment or unemployment it's putting pressure on a culture that they want to do. It's only for four weeks of a season. Now the majority of Aboriginal people are not into this business of what you should do and what you shouldn't do. To them they just like to be free, they just like to go and come back" (Furley Gardner interview).

Wildfowling in other Regions

Wild birds as a human food resource have played a significant part in human history. Around the world, wildfowling today generally centres on seabirds which breed in large numbers with predictable seasons (Diamond 1987: 101), and as they tend to breed in the more remote regions of a particular country, it is generally restricted to native people and local inhabitants. In the specific case of seabirds, in developed societies, the harvest of birds and their eggs has probably increased in recent decades because of greater mobility, more effective hunting techniques and better storage facilities (Feare 1984: 691). For example, in Canada, up to $450,000 \pm 50,000$ murres *Uria* species (spp.) are taken annually by indigenous Indians, Inuits and inhabitants of Newfoundland and Labrador (Wendt and Cooch 1984: 1). Since the 1950s the take of murres has increased greatly due to the availability of fast boats which has extended the hunting range. It has also been estimated that about 750,000 murres are killed in Greenland each year (Feare 1984: 696). In Europe, the Faroe Islanders have a tradition of seabird fowling extending over several centuries, with the take regulated by a series of well established rules and bag limits (Norrevang 1986: 275). However, there has been a slow decline in the number killed since the turn of the century, as the number of offshore fishing sloops has increased dramatically, displacing seabird harvesting, which has lost its once considerable economic importance. Human exploitation of seabirds in the Caribbean also has a tradition spanning several centuries, again with regulated customs. Now, in the twentieth century, wildfowl harvesting has caused a decline in numbers and is the main threat to populations (Haynes 1987: 110). In New Zealand taking of the sooty shearwater by indigenous Maoris is believed to have taken place on a large scale until late in the pre-European era (A. Anderson, University of Otago, unpublished). Archaeological evidence indicates that exploitation of the sooty shearwater and other Procellariiformes took place within a broader strategy of coastal fowling. No official statistics are kept of recent catch records.

In the past, the great primitive wildfowling communities were in the North Atlantic Ocean. The inhabitants of the Faroe Islands, Iceland, and even Tristan Da Cunha in the South Atlantic Ocean, combined seabird harvesting with farming and fishing. In contrast, the people on St. Kilda were socially and economically fully dependent on seabirds, and because of this, their society most closely approaches that of the Bass Strait islands community. Both communities gave rise to folklore and skilled boatmanship, had detailed knowledge of natural history, and fierce attachment to their islands in the face of obvious difficulties; both had small-group structure and behaviour, and individuals lived largely in harmony with each other, the St. Kildan society being "an

impressively well-integrated society" (Nelson 1978: 286); and both had clergymen who had the interests of the community in mind.

Situated on the edge of the continental shelf, 72 km west of the Scottish coast, the St. Kilda group of volcanic islands possesses the most extensive cliffs in Britain, and is also said to have the largest assemblage of seabirds in Britain (Fisher and Lockley 1954: 54). St. Kilda is known to have been occupied from at least the fourteenth century, and from the first known written record of the islands and their inhabitants, made in 1549, it is clear that there was already a stable community (Fisher and Lockley 1954: 69). The human population reached c. 200 in 1705 and during the nineteenth century hovered between 80-100 (Fisher 1952: 134). These population figures are very similar to those of the Aborigines in the Furneaux Group. Similarly, many of the St. Kildans were illiterate, impoverished, and susceptible to infections carried by visitors. The main island, Hirta, had a few resident ministers for much of the occupation.

Every visitor to St. Kilda had some comment to make on the fowling, and there is a remarkably complete picture of the St. Kildans and their habits, much more so than exists for the Bass Strait islands community in the nineteenth century (Fisher 1952: 124). The birds chiefly taken were puffins *Fratercula arctica*, fulmars *Fulmarus glacialis*, and gannets *Sula bassana*. Guillemots *Uria aalge*, Manx shearwaters and razorbills *Alca torda*, were less exploited. The St. Kildans were said to have eaten one seabird nearly every day of the year, and more puffins were killed than any other species of bird. In 1876 the kill was estimated at 89,600 (Fisher and Lockley 1954: 95). By the late 1890s feathers had decreased in value, and by 1902, feather-taking had finished, and puffins were taken for food only. In the 100 years from 1829-1929, the inhabitants took an average of 115 fulmars a year per person. The greatest annual total catch reliably reported is 12,000 for the years 1829-43, when the human population averaged 102. The fulmar was taken for food until the island was abandoned in 1930 (Fisher and Lockley 1954: 93). The annual gannet cull ceased in 1910, and in the period between 1829-43 the highest annual kill was never more than 5,000 young and 2,000-3,000 adults (Nelson 1978: 286).

Per head of population the total annual kill of birds was at least twice as large in Bass Strait as on St. Kilda. This was probably because the resource was much larger, and that access to the muttonbird colonies was much easier and safer compared to the cliffs of St. Kilda on which the majority of fulmars, gannets and puffins bred. However, the cash economies were similar. The Bass Strait Islander's cash economy depended largely on muttonbirds to pay debts, and to provide until the next season. In many cases, part of

the season's catch was forfeited to storekeepers to pay for provisions provided by them to the muttonbirders. St. Kilda was privately owned, and from very early days, there was an annual trading and rent-collecting visit. Seabirds often paid the rent. In 1815 the island rent amounted to £40, paid in feathers; in 1841 it was about £60; in 1847 each family's rent was about 168 lbs of fulmar, gannet and puffin feathers. Feathers were exported consistently until the 1890s, when they lost value and were no longer collected. 1902 is the last known year of feathers and oil being sold for rent. A similar situation currently exists in Tasmania, where, in the 1990s, feathers of muttonbirds have been collected and then dumped because they cannot be sold. Similarly, the musty smell of oil and feathers is reported to have pervaded everything in St. Kilda, even the houses in which the inhabitants lived (Fisher 1952: 144). Such observations have also been reported from the Bass Strait islands.

In all the above cases, traditional knowledge, accumulated through the centuries, complements present ecological knowledge (Norrevang 1986: 275), even though wildfowling has lost the importance it once had in the individual communities. In a comparable case, a recent study of the waterfowl hunting patterns of Canadian Cree Indians showed that the cash replacement value of native food, including mammals and fish, was less than fifty percent of total income, although in practice, the native foods were viewed as irreplaceable in terms of cultural and even community health (Scott 1987: 51, 53). This is because processed store-purchased foods in remote communities were expensive and narrow in choice. Despite this, wildfowling in these communities will make smaller but still significant contributions to the preservation of old cultural traits in modern day life, because of the traditions that evolved during the seasonal harvesting of the birds.

Future of Muttonbirding

The situation of the Cree Indians is also the situation in Tasmania where most contemporary muttonbirders live in towns in an industrialised society. The existence of muttonbirding in a modern twentieth century western culture therefore seems remarkable. It is a cottage industry that will probably continue in a small way, as long as there are people who will eat muttonbirds, and muttonbirders who will pass on their skills to the next generation. Muttonbirding is perhaps the only seasonal commercial activity left in Australia where friends and relatives gather to work, firstly because of tradition, and secondly because of the welcomed financial incentive. Its benefits are social and psychological in nature; they result not just from harvesting birds but also from visiting the muttonbird colonies, forming re-acquaintances, and the expectations of the season's

results. Muttonbirding draws companions with whom experiences, symbols and sentiments can be shared. In this sense, much of the meaning of muttonbirding is manifested socially. As one of the young Aboriginal descendants, Sharon Hughes, described it: "It's the people there that you haven't seen for a couple of years, they go, see them, talk to them and that. The saddest part is leaving them all again" (Sharon Hughes interview).

There is a new pride in Aboriginal heritage and a demand for a lifestyle that espouses Aboriginality. In the present age of that catch-word, 'self-determination', Aborigines are looking back into history and reclaiming their past. They are discovering in muttonbirding a bond with their ancestors that allows them to 'return to the islands'. According to Steve Stanton, Chairman of the Tasmanian Land Council, "Aboriginality is the feeling of belonging to the land knowing that your ancestors were Aboriginal and that they walked that land" (Steve Stanton, personal communication). The 'land' not only includes specific sacred and heritage sites, but is the total landscape. In the 1990s Aborigines in Tasmania are rediscovering the thread which links them to their most ancient ancestral past. In all this it is the binding tradition of muttonbirding which has enabled the Aboriginal community to stay together. Without the presence of muttonbirding as a social tradition among Aborigines, the community would have disintegrated once it left the haven of Cape Barren Island. In recent decades the recovery of Aboriginality has strengthened the link with the 'land', of which the muttonbird islands are an integral part. As Kim Stonehouse stated: "That's what's still in the blood I suppose, birding time, still reminds you of the old days, and the old hands that were there before you and the ones that taught you" (Kim Stonehouse interview).

Aboriginal Culture and Wildlife Resources in Australia

While the link between Tasmanian Aborigines and muttonbirding is unique among indigenous people in Australia, the use of wildlife resources in general to sustain Aboriginal communities was, and still is prevalent. In prehistoric southeast Australia Aborigines used a wide variety of techniques to secure birds, predominantly waterfowl, and the scant ethnographic accounts show that wildfowling was a seasonal activity in which most Aboriginal camps participated (Gaughwin 1978: 13). Contemporary Aborigines exploit islands and surrounding maritime resources in northern Australia (Barker 1991; O'Connor 1992), and Betty Meehan has shown how the Anbarra community in Arnhem Land continues to fish, and hunt and gather a variety of plants and animals, but supplements these resources with European foods such as flour, sugar and tea (Meehan 1989: 171). The seasonality of muttonbirding can also be compared to

the past gathering by Aborigines of the Bogong moth *Agrostis infusa*, in the Australian Alps during the summer. As with muttonbirds, the moths provided Aborigines their main source of carbohydrate and fat, and was one of their favourite foods (Flood 1980: 82, 194).

However, history also shows that confrontation in Australia between Aboriginal hunter/gatherer communities and European agricultural societies has had the inevitable result of alienating Aboriginal people from their land and resources. In seeking comparisons, there are close parallels between the histories of the Bass Strait Aboriginal community and Aborigines in Victoria. European settlement of Tasmania and Victoria was wrought by violence, bloodshed and disease (Critchett 1990). From around 10,000-12,000 Aborigines in Victoria at the time of European settlement in 1835, the number declined to only 774 in 1877 (Mulvaney 1989: 146). Even George Augustus Robinson came over from Tasmania in 1841 to take up an appointment as Chief Protector of Aborigines. His monumental diaries are the legacy of his efforts. By the late 1850s European occupation of Victoria was virtually complete.

Similarly to the Furneaux Group, government reserves were established in Victoria from the 1860s that came to resemble pioneer rural settlements taking on the social lifestyle of Europeans (Mulvaney 1989:152). The details of one of these stations have been succinctly outlined by Jan Critchett (1992). There were 90 people at Framlingham prior to its closure in 1889 (Critchett 1992: 26) compared with 110 on Cape Barren Island in 1891 (Montgomery 1892:229). Both communities lost their land and freedom to European settlers, and their initial high hopes of favourable government policy in the 1850s and 1860s had certainly disappeared by the turn of the century (Critchett 1992: 49). In the case of the Bass Strait islands community, the Aborigines were forced onto Cape Barren Island, while the inhabitants at Framlingham were moved to another station. The facts regarding the settlements in the two states reveal that the minds of the Victorian and Tasmanian Governments in their policy towards Aborigines were very similar. Both attempted to assimilate part-Aborigines into the general community without providing any assistance, which for people who only knew life on an Aboriginal station, was a time of great hardship (Critchett 1992: 50). However, in both Victoria and Tasmania there were missionaries and citizens who endeavoured to bring about change for the better.

For contemporary Aborigines in Australia, the past has been a long lesson in the difficulty of getting government recognition of their claims to land and resources for self-determination. The current situation is that Aboriginal Australians still run second to

white Australians (Mansell 1994: 161). In the case of Tasmanian Aborigines though, muttonbirding has given them confidence in themselves and a direction for their culture, whilst on mainland Australia the exploitation of wildlife resources for the economic benefit of Aboriginal communities is now widespread, aided by economic incentives and scientific advice from the Federal Government (Meek and O'Brien 1992: 1).

The Thesis

The broad history of the Bass Strait island communities is well-known because of the interest in the Aboriginal settlement on Flinders Island in the 1830-40s (Plomley 1966, 1987), and of the general public fascination with muttonbirds and muttonbirding popularised through many articles by non-Aborigines (for example: Adam-Smith 1966; Brownrigg 1979; *Examiner* May-August 1883; Serventy 1974; Tindale 1954). However, Murray-Smith (1974, 1979) is the only person to have attempted to begin to detail the social fabric of the Cape Barren Island community in the nineteenth century, and even his account includes only a brief mention of the role of muttonbirding (Murray-Smith 1986). Thus the story of the community in the twentieth century has been largely untouched. Lyndall Ryan (1977, 1987) and Bill Mollison (1974) laid down a chronology of the major events and issues that confronted the Aborigines in terms of dispossession of the islands, as well as changes in government policies from protection and assimilation to self-determination. Until relatively recently Aboriginal writing in Tasmania did not exist. No one attempted to give their side of the story until Ida West described her upbringing on Flinders Island in her poignant, evocative book, *Pride against Prejudice* (West 1984). Other Aborigines, such as Anonymous (1982), Mansell (1977) and Sculthorpe (1981), have authored journal articles concentrating on the theme of self-determination and land rights.

Until this thesis, no one has critically examined the available evidence to appraise the role of muttonbirding in the history of Aborigines in Tasmania. The significance of the present contribution is the connection it draws between muttonbirding and the other factors that have influenced the lives of the Islanders from when they first settled the Bass Strait islands, to the present day. These factors include the demography and ethnic background of the population over time; land tenure dealings; government protection policies on the Cape Barren Island Reserve through Acts and regulations; government regulation of the muttonbird industry; and changes in the general social fabric of the island community.

Direct sources on muttonbirding in the nineteenth century are rare, as the island community did not have a written tradition. Some of the major sources I have used have been direct correspondence between individual Aborigines and the government; government correspondence with intermediaries; land tenure and Treasury records; government statistics; newspapers; police reports; administrative records for the Cape Barren Island Reserve; and company financial records. Finally, in an attempt to understand the culture of muttonbirding, in other words, in studying the present to establish the past, some 50 Aboriginal and European muttonbirders were interviewed. Extracts from the interviews are used to support my claim that muttonbirding was, and still is, a vital link in the lives of these people.

This thesis will attempt to show that:

- the link between Tasmanian Aborigines' conception of their Aboriginality has, historically been crucially dependent on the annual season of muttonbirding.
- muttonbirding underpinned the economic and cultural foundation of the Aboriginal community while it existed on Tasmania's Bass Strait islands.
- through muttonbirding, which is a collective occupation, the community shared access to both land and resources, and formed a close-knit settlement on Cape Barren Island.
- the tradition of muttonbirding and life on the muttonbird islands is important to contemporary Aborigines, in the present surge of Aboriginal culture and history, because it provides an enduring sense of the past.

The thesis is divided into two parts. The first three chapters cover the anecdotal history and biology of the muttonbird (to background later discussion of the significance of the Islander social history); the prehistoric use of muttonbirds as food for Aborigines through a review of archaeological sites; and a review of early European observations of muttonbirds, including the reports on sealers on the islands and of the Aboriginal settlement on Flinders Island. Chapters 4 to 6 analyse the population growth, the land deals, and the social structure of life on the islands, in order to provide a framework for discussion, in the second part of the thesis, of the importance of muttonbirding to the Bass Strait islands community. Chapter 6 also includes reference to the struggles by contemporary Aborigines to reclaim their past.

Chapters 7 to 13 describe the processes, techniques and rituals of the muttonbird season and the impact of these on the participants. Details of the records of both an island store in the early 1900s, and one of the main business houses in Launceston, are then presented to give an insight into the costs and expenses associated with muttonbirding. Discussion then focuses upon how the advent of government regulations on health

standards brought about dramatic changes in the number of muttonbird sheds which has had ramifications to the present day. Muttonbirding on Tasmania's northwest islands is then introduced to explain how contemporary Aborigines have turned to this region for the harvesting of muttonbirds. In the final chapter, the socio-economics of muttonbirding in the 1980s is analysed, together with the impact that amateur muttonbirding has had on the industry. The thesis concludes with an examination of present day muttonbirding, and with an assessment of its future.

CHAPTER 1

THE TASMANIAN MUTTONBIRD

"J. Munro informed me that these birds resort to the island about the 20/9 mo. when they scratch out their holes, that they leave again about the 8/11 mo. and return to lay about the 21/11 mo. Each hole is occupied by a male and a female. The female lays but one egg which is somewhat larger than that of a duck. They finally leave about the 8/5 mo. when the young are able to fly" (Robinson 1987: 221).

The short-tailed shearwater commonly known as the Tasmanian muttonbird, is one of the most plentiful birds in the high Arctic during the boreal summer. In that region it must have come under the notice of many navigators and possibly the first written record of it was by the Russian geographer Stephen Krascheninnikow in 1761 (Dementiev and Gladkova 1951: 371). He recorded the muttonbird from the Kurile Islands but there are no specimens to substantiate his observation, and Dominic Serventy (CSIRO, personal communication) says his identification should not be relied on.

The muttonbird was formally described by the Dutch ornithologist Jacob Coenraad Temminck in 1835, the description being based on a stylised illustration of a petrel, not the muttonbird itself (Temminck 1835: Plate 587). It has had a variety of Latin name changes since, from *Puffinus brevicaudus* of Gould, 1847 to *Neonectris tenuirostris hulli* of Matthews, 1916 (Condon 1975: 34). The present scientific name for the bird is *Puffinus tenuirostris* from *Puffin* (new Latin), *tenui* (slender), *rostrum* (bill).

The first known illustrated record of the bird was made during Captain Cook's third and last voyage of 1776 to 1780 when William Ellis, assistant surgeon to both the *Resolution* and *Discovery*, painted his picture (Plate 1) in the north of the Bering Sea, probably in August 1778. The watercolour is notated "amongst the ice", and was described by

Sharpe (1906: 152) as an unidentifiable species of *Puffinus*. However, Stresemann (1953: 371) and Lysaght (1959: 328) consider that it does represent *P. tenuirostris*. The Alexander Turnbull Library in New Zealand holds a collection of Ellis' bird drawings, one of which is a drawing of the head, foot and bill of *P. tenuirostris* and is inscribed "Brown Sheerwater N. W. C. of America" (Medway 1977: 23).

The next major illustration of the muttonbird is by John Gould in his tome on the Birds of Australia (Gould 1848: Volume VII, Plate 56). Drawn by his wife, Elizabeth, the preliminary pencil drawing is inscribed "Lat. 39° 22' S. Long. 57° 55' W. J. & E. Gould". Gould visited the Flinders Island Aboriginal settlement in early January 1839 and saw muttonbirds at their breeding rookery on Big Green Island (Robinson 1987: 612). The picture was probably painted during the voyage home from Australia to England, April to August 1840, when Gould made a special study of petrels (McEvey 1987: 61).

THE TERM 'MUTTONBIRD'

The origin of the term 'muttonbird' is disputed as the meat does not seem to taste like mutton to many people (Davies 1846: 16). John Boulton, in 1823 said that they were called muttonbirds because their flesh tasted like mutton (Boulton 1986: 17), while John Gould considered (after Davies 1846: 16) that they were called muttonbirds because the large amounts of fat in fledgling birds looked like tallow around sheep carcasses (Gould 1865: 462).

The first use of petrels by Europeans in Australia was probably on Norfolk Island, situated approximately 1000 km east of Brisbane. In the winter of 1790 the settlers on the island faced starvation due to crop failures and the loss of the supply vessel *Sirius* (HR NSW 1, 2: 380). Fortunately, in April thousands of petrels arrived to begin breeding in burrows on the slopes of Mount Pitt at the northern end of the island. Their presence averted hunger that year. These birds were called 'Mount Pitt Birds', 'Norfolk Island Petrels' or 'Birds of Providence'. Scientifically, they were the Solander's or providence petrel *Pterodroma solandri*, a bird slightly larger than the Tasmanian muttonbird.

Lieutenant Ralph Clark, Quartermaster General and Keeper of the Public Store on Norfolk Island, recorded in his journal that 172,184 birds had been killed between mid-April and 16 July 1790 (Clark 1981: 147). In a dispatch to a friend in Britain, he wrote, on 26 August 1790:



Plate 1. Earliest known depiction of the Tasmanian muttonbird. Watercolour painting by William Ellis in the far North Pacific in August 1778 (Reproduced by permission of the British Museum of Natural History, London).

The Mount Pit Birds have been the greatest friends that ever any of us Know for I may with truth Say that the[y] have Saved all our lives — the greatest part of us Should have been long agoe in our graves if it had not been for these birds — Since April last there has been no less one night with a nother than between four and five Thousand Kild — I Shall Return my thanks for them the longes day I have to live — the[y] are all nearly gone the[y] Just lasted untill the arrival of the Ships (Clark 1981: 284).

In the same year Captain John Hunter recognised the importance of the bird by referring to it as the 'Bird of Providence'. The slaughter continued each year and as well as hunting the birds, the settlers had reputedly 15,000 pigs loose by 1796 (Fullagar 1976: 45). These left the surviving petrels with no safe burrowing sites and they became extinct on Norfolk Island. The providence petrel now breeds only on Lord Howe Island (Fullagar 1976: 45).

The term 'muttonbird' however applied not to the providence petrel but to the wedge-tailed shearwater *P. pacificus*, which at present is common and widespread on Norfolk Island (Schodde *et al.* 1983: 73). Continuing his letter, Clark wrote:

...but there is a nother bird come in now also a Sea foul which Burrows in the ground also like the Mount Pit Bird (which the[y] call mutton Birds) from there tasting like mutton--the[y] are Remarkably fatt and in great abundance (Clark 1981: 284-285).

The distinction between the two species of petrels was made also by John Nagle, an American sailor on the *Sirius*. He mentions that the birds saved their lives:

But the princible see bird that resorted and bread on the island was call'd mount-piters and mutton birds...In respect of the mutton birds, they ware rather smaller than the mount pitters. They breed all over the island, having holes under ground. The method we had to ketch them was with a hoe and a sharp pointed stick. When we found a hole, hollow out "ke, ke, ke," and if the old ones were there or the young when hatched, they would answer you, crying out in the same manner and runing to the entrance of the hole, and if you missed ketching holt of him, he will run back again. Then, the way the sound of him was, you run the sharp stick down into the ground, it being like a soft mold, and clap your mouth to

the hole and hollow, he will answer, and so on. By that means you will dig over him, and the ground being soft, it falls in and stops his hole up. You then ketch him (Nagle 1988: 124-125).

One of the earliest written usages of the term 'muttonbird' to describe petrels in general is on some plates known as the 'Watling Drawings' in the British Museum. Plate Number 280 is annotated 'Norfolk Island Petrel or Mutton bird, in full feather' (Sharpe 1906: 152). According to Serventy (1958: 328) this note was probably written by Surgeon-General John White who was in New South Wales from 1788 to 1794. Thomas Watling was a professional artist transported for forgery. He was an employee of John White and drew birds, animals, plants and landscapes for him (Chisholm 1962: 26-27) and others, including David Collins the first governor of Van Diemen's Land — now Tasmania (Hackforth-Jones 1977: 82).

The term 'muttonbird' seems to have come into vogue after 1800 as Flinders was still describing short-tailed shearwaters as 'Mount-Pitt' birds in 1801 (Flinders 1801: 15). By the time George Augustus Robinson was writing his journals of his interactions with the Tasmanian Aborigines in the late 1820s and 1830s the term was in common usage. At the present time the term 'muttonbird' is confined to shearwaters, specifically in Australia to the short-tailed shearwater and in New Zealand to the sooty shearwater *P. griseus* (Campbell and Lack 1985: 372). In other regions of the world where the young of petrels, including shearwaters, are harvested for food, other local names are used for the birds.

ECOLOGY OF THE MUTTONBIRD

The Tasmanian muttonbird weighs about 500 g and has a wing span of 1 m. It is wholly dark brownish-black above and slightly paler below. Sexes are alike and immature or pre-breeders are identical to adults. It is one of about 100 species in the relatively small order Procellariiformes (*Procella* = storm) whose members range in size from 30 g storm petrels to 10 kg albatrosses. Most are strictly marine birds coming to land only to breed. The diagnostic feature of the order is the external nostrils produced into tubes extending onto the bill. Other distinctive features are the hooked and plated bill and the glandular part of the stomach which is greatly extended and produces the well known 'oil', actually wax esters (Warham *et al.* 1976: 5). Most members in this order have a distinctive musky odour which in the case of muttonbirds is retained in the feathers until removed by chemical process. Biologically most are long lived, breed annually and seasonally and have a slow rate of population increase (Skira 1991: 49).

The family Procellariidae is the most diverse group in the order and contains about 61 species of petrels and shearwaters (Serventy *et al.* 1971: 82). Without exception all are colonial breeders and communal feeders often gathering in huge numbers in 'rafts'. The majority are nocturnal and nest in holes, burrows or crevices, which serve to protect them and their young from predators. Probably because they are nocturnal all are dull coloured, generally dark above and lighter below.

The broad extent of their feeding grounds and the limited range of suitable nesting areas have resulted in many rookeries (also termed colonies) of petrels becoming extremely large. The genus *Puffinus* consists of some fifteen medium-sized species that are among the world's most numerous seabirds. Their high nesting densities and their fidelity to a particular site have meant that they are highly vulnerable to exploitation.

The muttonbird was one of the first Australian birds to be banded in large numbers (Serventy 1957: 51; 1961: 42) and to be subjected to a long-term scientific study (Guiler *et al.* 1958: 165). This study was commenced on Fisher Island in the Furneaux Group of Tasmania in March 1947 by Dominic Serventy of the CSIR (Council for Scientific and Industrial Research) and continues today (Serventy 1977: 60). Strayer *et al.* (1986: 5) have reviewed the essential qualities of long-term studies and most of them are exemplified in the muttonbird research on Fisher Island (Bradley *et al.* 1991: 55). These qualities include a low turnover of dedicated staff and a consistent and simple sampling program with unambiguous methods. Serventy last visited Fisher Island in December 1976 and remained involved with the project up to his death in August 1988. Due to the long-term nature of the study, together with the banding of some 92,000 birds in Australia, the life history of the muttonbird is one of the best documented of any bird in the world (Bradley *et al.* 1989: 175; 1990: 488; Serventy 1974: 1; Serventy and Curry 1984: 71; Wooller *et al.* 1988: 848; 1989: 406; 1990: 162).

Evolution

The Procellariiformes are an ancient group of birds that probably originated from groups of aquatic birds present at the end of the Cretaceous, some 64 million years ago. They had become established in the Lower Tertiary (Brodkorb 1971: 44), albatrosses first appearing in the Middle Eocene. The phylogenetic history of shearwaters is little known (Kuroda 1954: 115). According to Olson (1985: 211), "most of the modern species-groups, or subgenera, of *Puffinus* were in existence by the Middle Miocene and there has been very little morphological change within these lineages in 15 million years or so".

P. tenuirostris has not been found in any deposits apart from pre-historic archaeological sites (Bowdler 1984: 1; Friedmann 1934a: 87; 1934b: 231; 1941: 405; Vanderwal and Horton 1984: 94). However its ancestry can be postulated. One of the fossil procellariids (*P. conradi*) from the Middle Miocene of Maryland, United States, seems to have lived to the Pleistocene, one million years ago. *P. tenuirostris* may have evolved from a *P. conradi*-type ancestor through the *P. inceptor* line (Kuroda 1954: 115). *P. inceptor* is known from the Middle Miocene of California, suggesting that *P. tenuirostris* and its congener, the sooty shearwater, were differentiated in the North Atlantic-North America zone. Having settled in the southern hemisphere perhaps as late as the Pleistocene their post-breeding migration may be an instinctive response to return to the northern hemisphere (Kuroda 1954: 121).

The fossil record left by birds in Australia is meagre compared to that of Europe and North America. It spans too short a period of time and is too low in diversity to test biogeographic hypotheses. The oldest petrel and shearwater fossils occur in the late Pleistocene or Holocene from coastal deposits around mainland Australia and Tasmania. In these deposits the genera *Pterodroma* and *Puffinus* predominate (Rich and Van Tets 1982: 301). The interval from 25,000 to 10,000 Before Present (BP) was a period of great faunal and climatic change in Australia. Climatic disruptions would have affected the location of muttonbird rookeries through changes in sea levels. At times, the coastline was up to 50 km away from its current position (Blom 1988: 96; Jennings 1971: 4).

The geological history of Bass Strait can be traced to the Jurassic (195 to 135 million years ago) with the main outlines of the Bass Basin and associated upland troughs formed by the Palaeocene (Jennings 1971: 4). About 70 to 80 million years ago the central part of what is now Bass Strait began to sink in the basin elongated from southeast to northwest, forming the Bass Basin (Jennings 1969: 18). However the sea did not begin to penetrate until around 45 million years ago, turning the Bassian Depression into a large estuary. How early Bass Strait appeared is not known accurately but it may have been in existence by the Upper Eocene (Jennings 1959: 52). Towards the end of the Tertiary the sea had regressed several times due to ice ages. During these glacial stages the whole of Bass Strait became land again and in the last inter-glacial, about 37,000 BP, the sea rose to 12 m above its present sea-level (Jennings 1971: 7, 9).

The last ice-age culminated about 20,000 BP and although all of Bass Strait may have been land for only a short time the Bassian Rise probably remained above sea-level for much longer. The importance of a marked break in slope at the 65 m level suggests a

pronounced stand-still at that level. The encroaching sea would first have flooded the Otway Depression and Bassian Depression. The link between Victoria and Flinders Island was broken sometime between 10,000 and 15,000 BP, with research based on glacioeustatic curves giving a narrower estimate of between 12,000 to 13,500 years ago (Jennings 1971: 9). Next to disappear was the King Island Rise between King Island and northwest Tasmania with most estimations concurring at a date being between 10,000 and 12,500 BP. Similarly the link between Tasmania and the Furneaux Group across Banks Strait was probably broken between 8,500 to 10,000 BP. Sea levels rose to their present level about 6,000 to 7,000 years ago.

There is some dispute about whether fluctuations have occurred in sea levels since (Sutherland 1973: 142). Falls of only 1 or 2 m would serve to connect several offshore islands to Flinders Island in the Furneaux Group and Robbins and Walker Islands in the Hunter Group. At the present day these last two islands are joined at low tide.

Distribution and Abundance

The short-tailed shearwater only breeds in Australia. There are known to be 167 rookeries around the coast of Tasmania and its near offshore islands, and another 14 in eastern Bass Strait from Craggy Island to Rodondo Island which are thought to contain half a million burrows (Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4). It is unlikely that many more remain to be discovered. The largest rookeries are on Babel Island with 2.86 million burrows and Trefoil Island with 1.54 million burrows (Towney and Skira 1985a: 103; 1985b: 112). A study funded by the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service between 1978-81 enabled seven commercial and eighteen other rookeries in Tasmania to be surveyed (Naarding 1979, 1980, 1981). The method used to obtain an estimate of burrow density was to measure the area of a rookery and to count the number of burrows in all vegetation types on 100 x 2 m transects. Straight line transects were used because of their simplicity and low variability (Skira and Wapstra 1980: 234). By knowing the area of a rookery and burrow density the total number of burrows present was calculated. The mean burrow density from transect counts on twelve rookeries was 0.75 burrows/m². The total area of rookeries is 1522 ha and the number of burrows is estimated to be 11.4 million (Skira *et al.* 1986: 225).

Of other Australian states, Victoria has 1.45 million burrows in about 30 rookeries (Harris and Norman 1981: 92), South Australia 600,000 burrows in 33 rookeries (A. C. Robinson, South Australia Parks and Wildlife, personal communication), New South Wales 25,700 breeding pairs in 13 rookeries (Lane 1979: 7) and Western Australia

10,000 burrows in several rookeries (Johnstone *et al.* 1990a: 131; 1990b: 133; Lane 1983: 37). It is estimated that in Australia 23 million birds breed in about 250 rookeries.

All rookeries in Tasmania are situated close to the sea. The majority are in silver tussock grassland of *Poa poiformis*, while others occur in coastal saltbush *Rhagodia baccata*, manuka *Leptospermum scoparium* and other scrub.

The distribution of muttonbird rookeries in the past appears to have been vastly different to that of today and there is much evidence that prior to the arrival of non-Aborigines in Australia there were none on the Tasmanian mainland. The first part of the twentieth century also corresponds with a general expansion of the breeding range of the muttonbird in Tasmania (Sharland 1956: 75). The present day commercial rookeries on Walker, Robbins and Three Hummock Islands were non-existent or very small until the turn of the century (Paddy Maguire, ex-lessee of Hunter Island, personal communication; *Advocate* 26 March 1977; *The Coastal News and North-Western Advertiser* 11 May 1892). The rookeries at Green Point on the West Coast and Point Sorell near Devonport are also of recent origin. Those on Betsey Island in southeast Tasmania were first noticed about 60 years ago (Bryden 1966: 26), while there were none on Slopens Island last century (*Mercury* 18 January 1876). There is also evidence that the rookeries at The Neck and Cape Queen Elizabeth on Bruny Island are also of recent origin, as a Tasmanian Field Naturalists excursion in 1907 does not report seeing any (Lord 1907: 13).

The cause of the expansion is not known. It could have been brought about either by deterioration of existing rookeries or an increase in numbers. Sea levels reached their present level 6,000 to 7,000 BP and until several hundred years ago muttonbirds were probably in equilibrium with their environment. Their breeding limit in terms of distribution and numbers was probably reached. In the last 200 to 300 years there has been an unprecedented slaughter in both the southern and northern hemispheres of seals, whales and fish stocks, disrupting the food chain. This may have made more food available for muttonbirds which feed predominantly on krill, squid and fish (Ogi *et al.* 1980: 179; Skira 1986: 481) with a consequent increase in population.

Migration

The muttonbird is a circum-Pacific migrant spending the boreal summer in the Northern Pacific region. Sexually immature birds depart from Australia near the end of March,

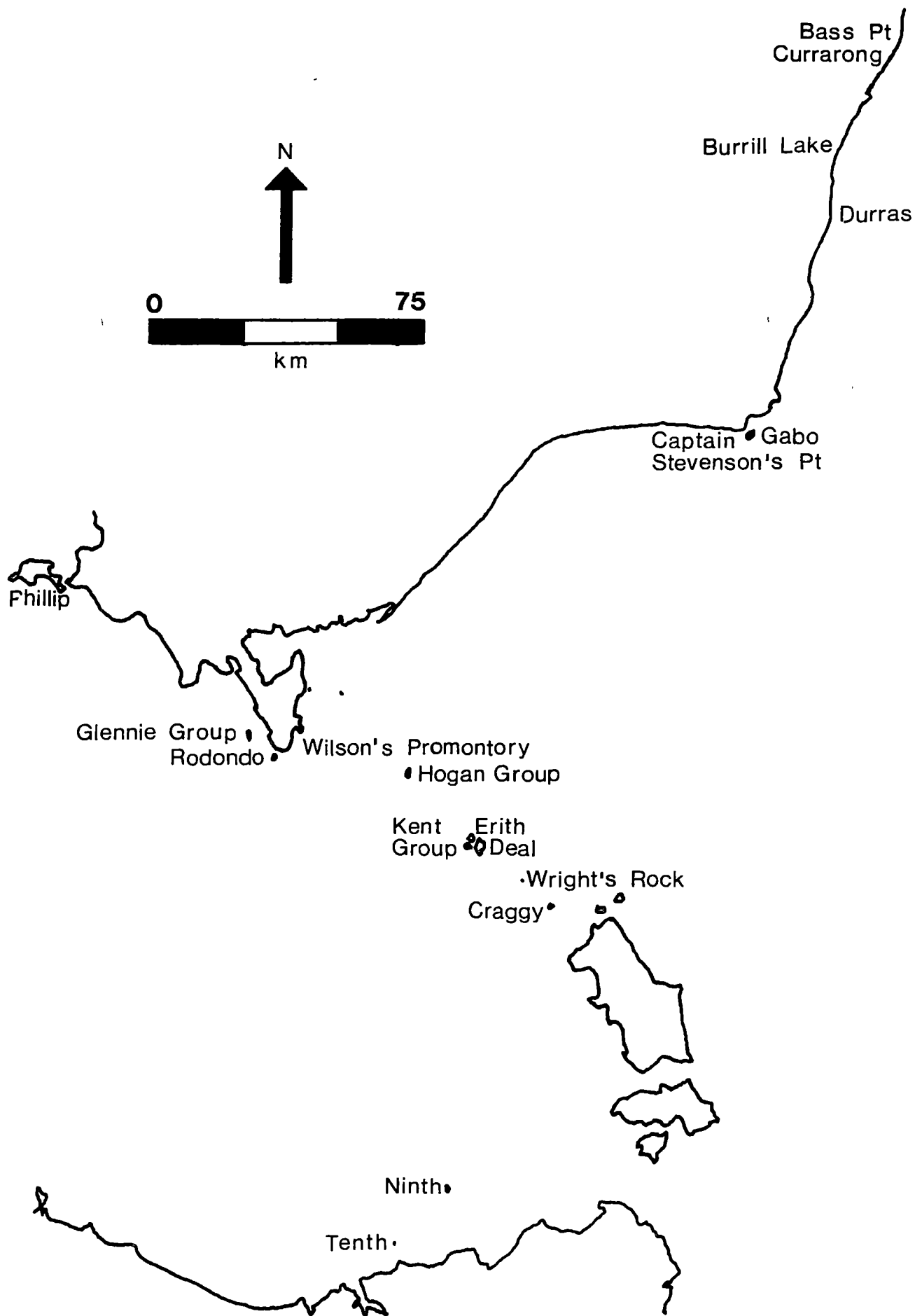


Figure 1. Location of place names in Bass Strait and mainland Australia.

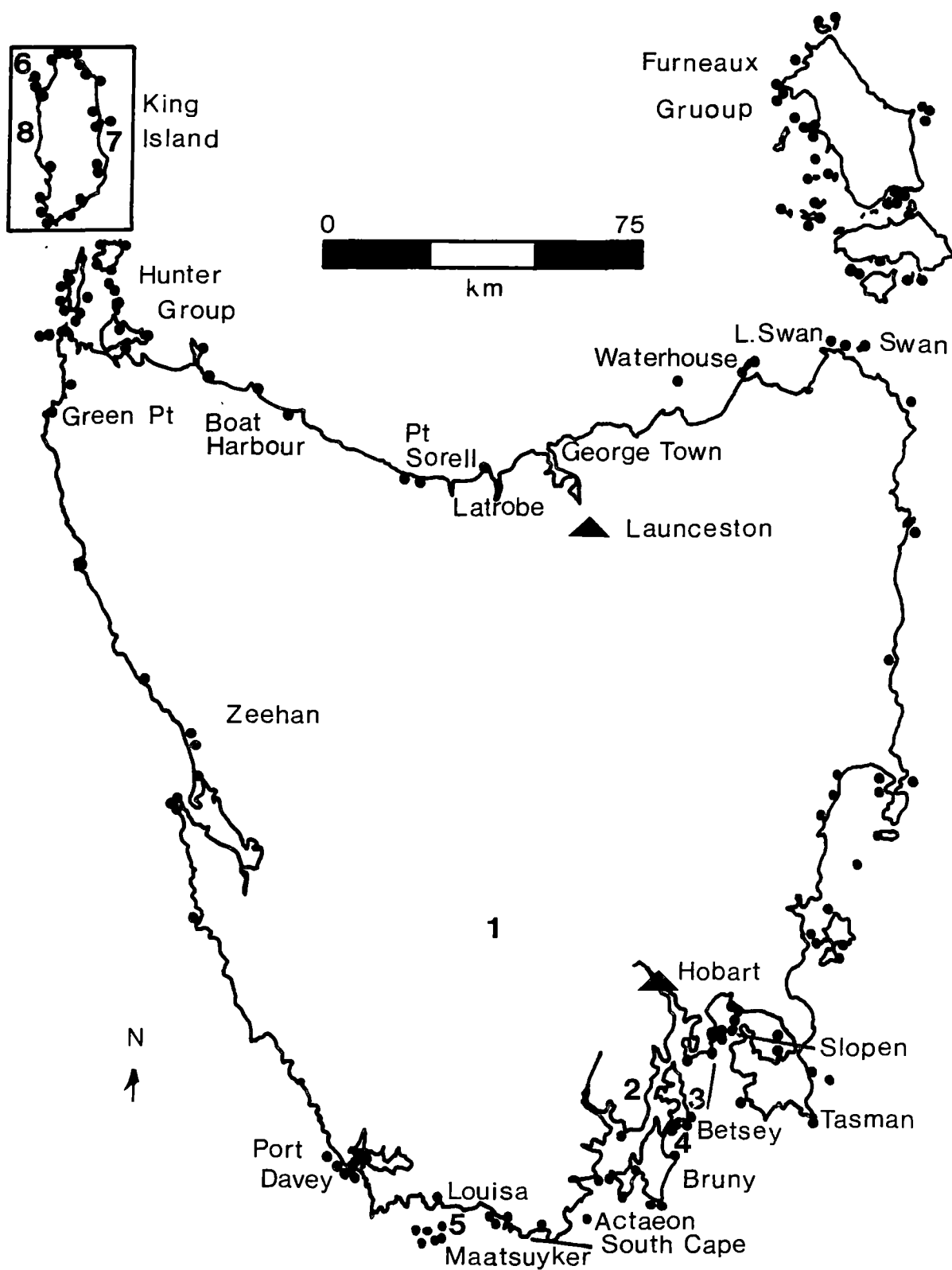
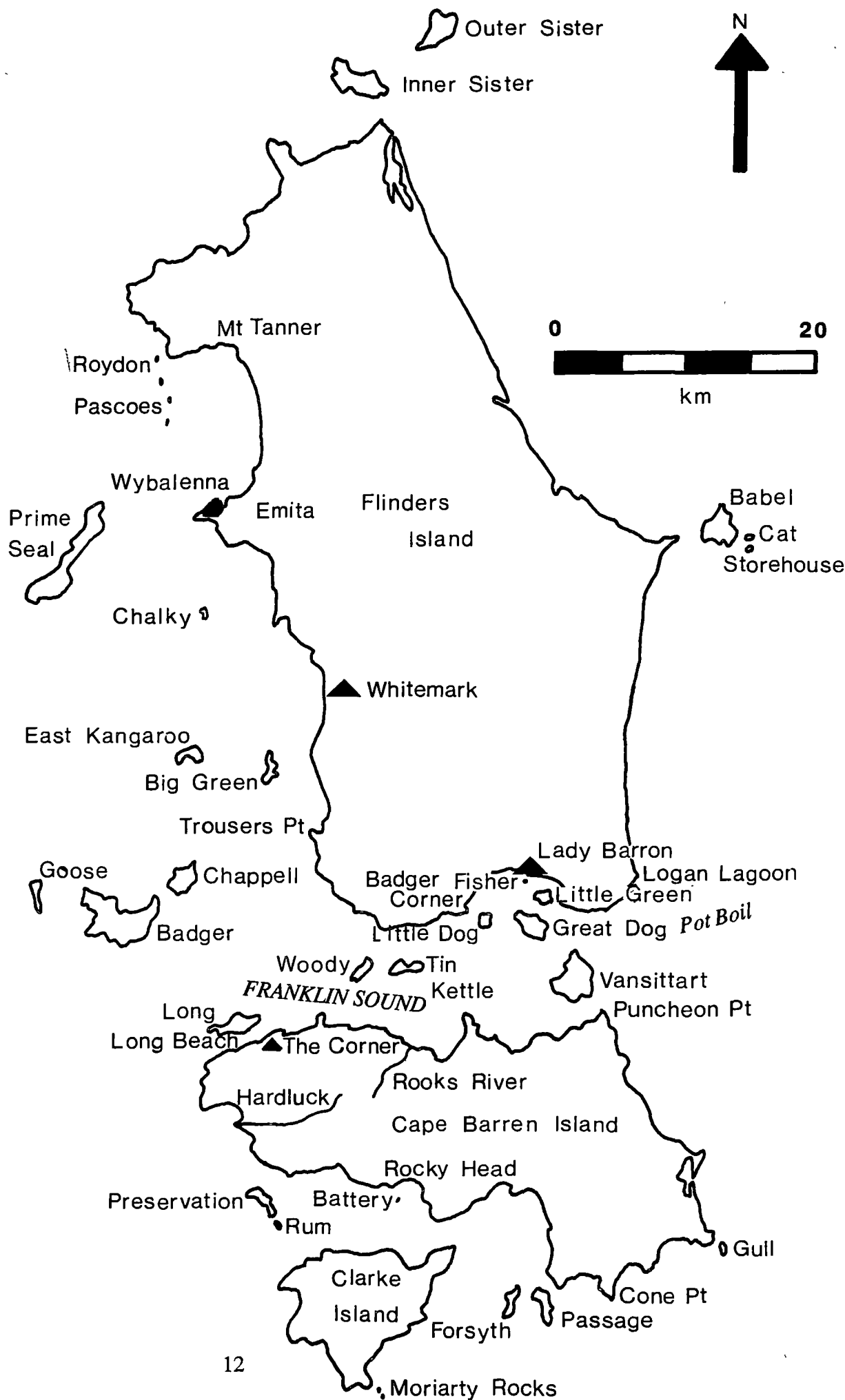


Figure 2. Location of muttonbird rookeries and place names in Tasmania.

Figure 3 Location of place names in the Furneaux Group.



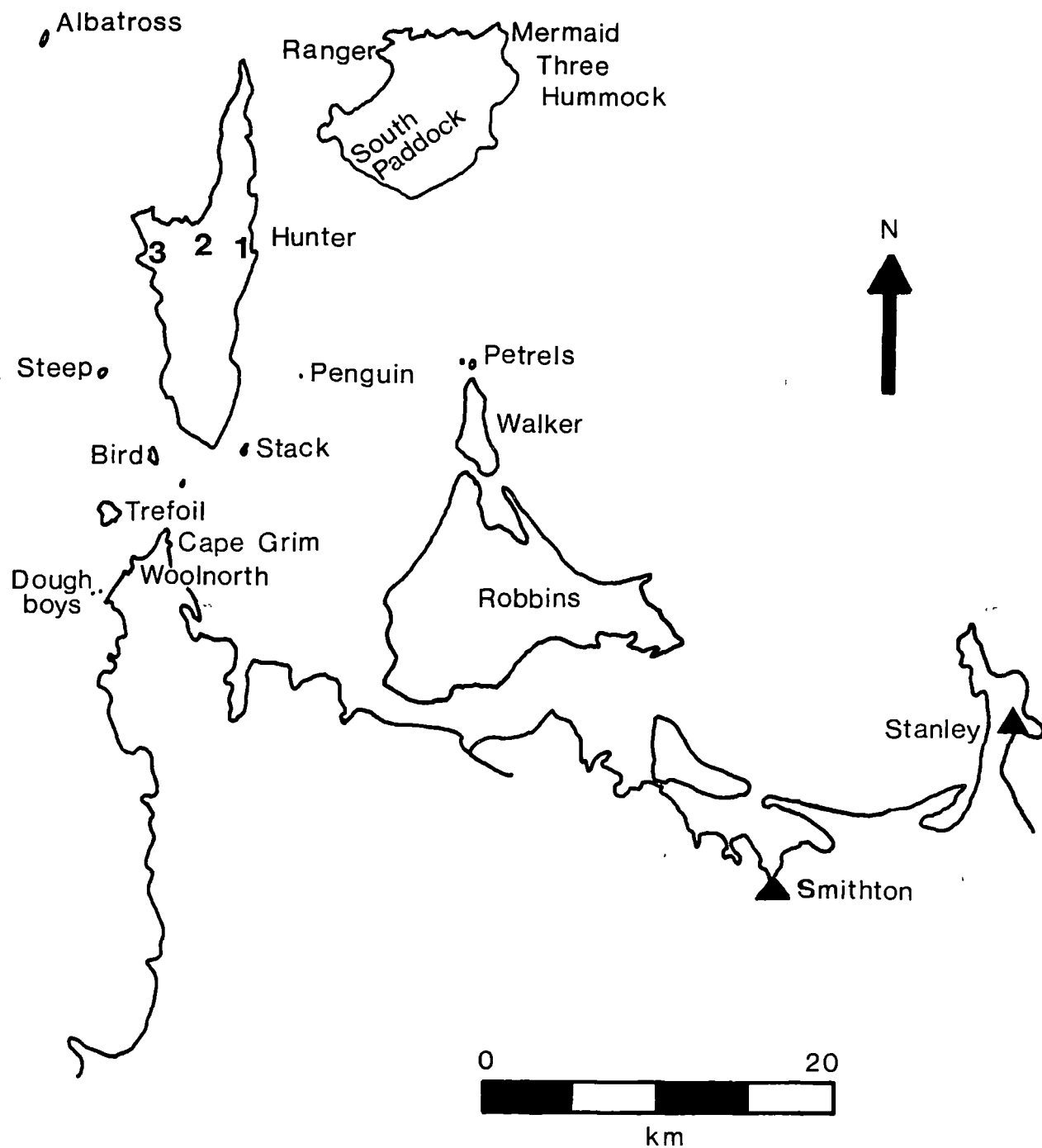


Figure 4 Location of place names in the Hunter Group.

followed by the breeding birds around mid-April, with the fledged chicks leaving at the end of April to early May. The shearwaters migrate rapidly (Serventy 1956: 316) and arrive in the northern hemisphere on a broad front across the central Pacific Ocean (Shuntov 1974: 82; Maruyama *et al.* 1989: 36).

Most arrivals to the northern part of the Pacific Ocean are observed from the end of April to the end of May or the beginning of June. The largest flocks can be observed in the eastern part of the Bering Sea in the northern hemisphere spring and the beginning of summer. In the second half of summer many pass into the Chukchi Sea and while birds are still dispersing into the Chukchi Sea, southwards migration begins. Some birds also migrate up the North American coast and some across the Pacific between the Hawaiian Islands and North America (Shuntov 1974: 82). This results in very large flocks occasionally occurring off the west Canadian coast in May under certain wind conditions (Guzman and Myres 1983: 2076).

In the Gulf of Alaska the short-tailed and sooty shearwaters are the dominant birds in spring and prefer the continental shelf which extends between 100 and 150 km offshore (Harrison 1982: 247). Numbers are greatest in May. By June their estimated density drops to half of that in May. In the northeast of the Gulf, the Kodiak area, short-tailed shearwaters outnumber sooty shearwaters by about 1.2:1 with flock sizes numbering 32,000 (Gould *et al.* 1982: 16).

The return journey commences at the beginning of September. Many muttonbirds have been observed moving through the western sector of the Pacific (Maruyama *et al.* 1986: 40). Some flocks pass south and well offshore through the Gulf of Alaska to California before heading across to Australia but the lack of sightings indicate that there is no migratory movement along the Canadian coast from August onwards. Some birds remain in the northern hemisphere during their first boreal winter (Forsell and Gould 1981: 26). The presence of birds along the coasts of Japan and North America led Serventy to postulate a figure-of-eight migration (Serventy 1953: 402). Data from seabird surveys by Japanese ornithologists however, indicate that migration occurs on a broad front across the Pacific Ocean (Maruyama *et al.* 1986: 36). It is possible that the route followed varies with the age or specific behaviour of the bird, but regardless of route, it is apparent that the movement of muttonbirds between the two hemispheres occurs on a very large broad front.

Feeding

At sea muttonbirds commonly form large aggregations on the sea surface called 'rafts'. These rafts are common in calm weather and birds may assemble when either feeding or resting. Muttonbirds are one of the most aquatic of the shearwaters, with long narrow pelvis and compressed tarsum, well developed knee joint process, long sternum, short thick compressed humerus and a short smooth body plumage (Brooke 1990: 29; Kuroda 1954: 71). They have been seen up to 10 m below the surface pursuing prey (Skira 1979: 43). Their feeding methods, as described in Ashmole (1971: 227) and ranked in order of importance, are pursuit plunging, surface seizing, pursuit diving, scavenging, hydroplaning and bottom feeding (Morgan 1982: 226; Morgan and Ritz 1982: 72; Ogi *et al.* 1980: 159; Skira 1979: 43).

In the southern hemisphere muttonbirds forage over vast areas (Serventy 1967: 169; Naarding 1980: 51). Kerry *et al.* (1983: 35) collected them at 65° South and found local organisms such as the Antarctic krill *Euphausia superba* in the stomachs. The time and duration spent by muttonbirds in Antarctic waters is not known nor whether they are breeding or immature birds. During the breeding season the muttonbird is a local or neritic feeder obtaining its food close to the rookery. The main food items in order of importance (percent frequency of occurrence) are the krill *Nyctiphanes australis*, the arrow squid *Notodarus sloani gouldi*, and other squid, fish and crustaceans (Montague *et al.* 1986: 201; Skira 1986: 483). *N. australis* is abundant in large swarms, particularly when breeding between October and December, and is restricted to the continental shelf (Blackburn 1980: 1). The diet of the birds changes when eggs hatch in January from predominantly krill to a mixture of fish, squid and crustacean. The transition could be due to reduced swarming of krill and an increase in the numbers of schooling post-larval fish (Montague *et al.* 1986: 207).

There is evidence that the abundance of *N. australis* fluctuates from year to year, as the distribution of the species is tied to water masses and major current systems. Of seven water masses moving along the shores of northern and eastern Australia (Rochford 1957: 378) four govern the food regime of the muttonbird. They are the Subantarctic, derived from the Southern Ocean; the Southwest Tasman from the eastern approaches to Bass Strait; the North Bass Strait from the South Australian Gulfs; and the East Tasmanian-West Tasmanian from the central Tasman and Subantarctic. Their mixing during movement from the source regions and changing pattern of distribution determine their major physical and chemical characteristics (Harris *et al.* 1987: 588), factors that affect the abundance and availability of the food of muttonbirds.

Breeding Biology

On arrival from their migration in September-October the birds clean out and refurbish their burrows (Figure 5). Breeding muttonbirds tend to occupy the same burrow as in previous years or one in close proximity. During October the rookeries are a hive of noisy social activity. Warham (1960: 83) says there are three factors that influence the numbers of birds coming ashore: the stage of the breeding cycle at that time, the activities of pre-breeding birds, and the phase of the moon. In the early years of commercial exploitation when adult birds were killed for their feathers, all three factors would have influenced the number of birds caught each day. For three weeks in November prior to egg-laying the rookeries are deserted. This pre-laying absence enables female shearwaters to build up body reserves to produce the egg which weighs sixteen percent of the female's body weight (Fitzherbert 1985: 50). In the case of male shearwaters the body reserves are for incubating the egg.

Eggs are laid from 19 November to 2 December, with 85 percent within three days on each side of the mean laying date, 24-26 November (Serventy 1963: 341). There is no annual variation in this pattern. Only one egg is laid and no re-laying occurs if the egg is lost. Sometimes eggs are laid on the surface, in some years in very large numbers, referred to as the 'glut' by muttonbirders. These are apparently laid by immature pre-breeders.

The incubation period varies between 52 and 55 days and averages 53 days. This compares with 43 days for the tiny Wilson's storm petrel *Oceanites oceanicus* (Warham 1990: 321), and up to 78 days for the large wandering albatross *Diomedea exulans* (Warham 1990: 320). Both partners incubate the egg in alternative shifts, the male usually taking the first shift. The length of the shifts varies from 10 to 16 days and occasionally up to 20 days. Eggs can be left unattended for up to seven days and still remain viable, as is the case with other shearwaters such as the Manx shearwater *P. puffinus* in Britain (Brooke 1990: 108; Matthews 1959: 432). Nearly all breeding failures occur during the egg stage as only three percent of successfully hatched chicks on Fisher Island died or disappeared before banding (Serventy and Curry 1984: 73).

The majority of chicks hatch between 10-23 January (Oka 1989: 197). They are brooded by the parents for the first few days then left unattended during the day. The chick is fed nightly for the first week then at longer intervals with up to sixteen days between meals. The parents alternate in the feeding. The final visit of the parents is from 1 to 23 days (mean 14) before the chicks depart (Serventy 1967: 169). The time between the final

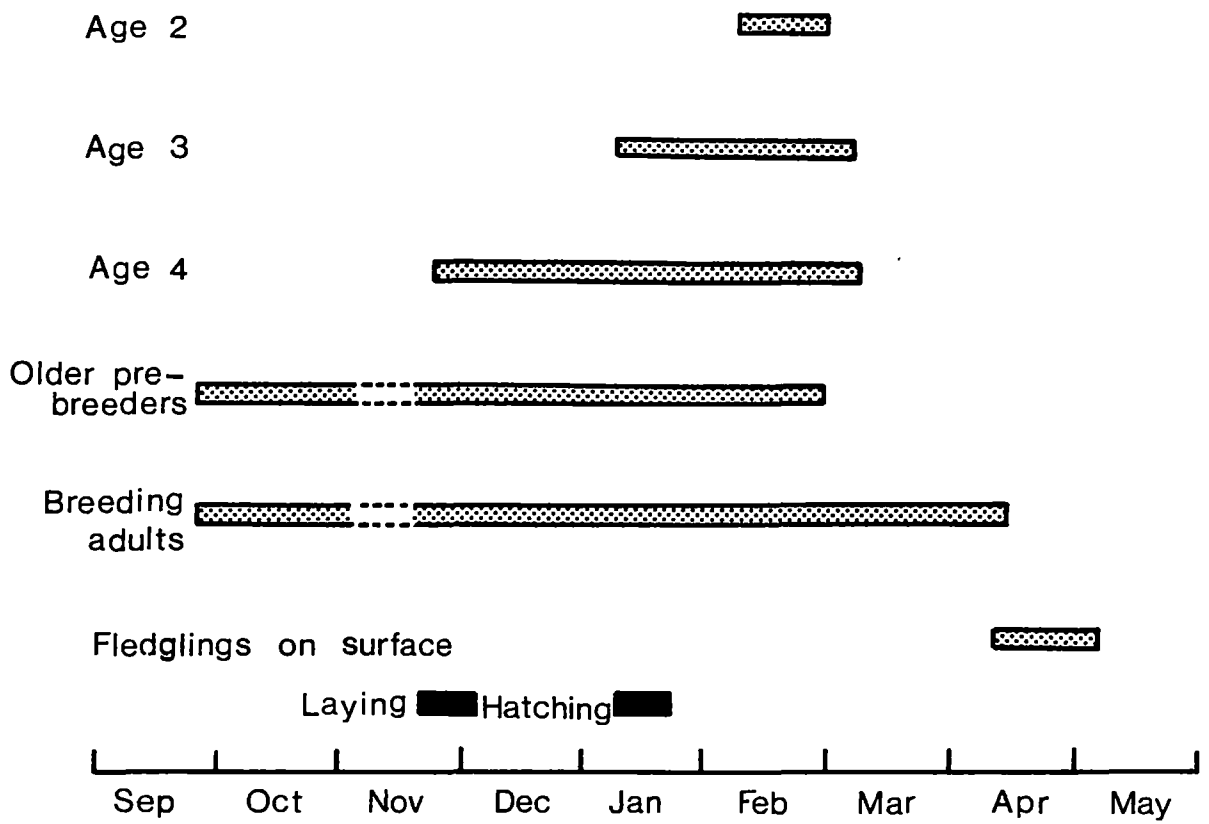


Figure 5. Seasonal composition of muttonbirds at rookeries according to age categories (after Serventy 1967: 174).

feed and departure is termed the 'starvation' or 'desertion' period. The muttonbird chick is in the burrow from 88 to 108 days (mean 94 days). During that time it grows quickly, forming large fat deposits and attaining a maximum mean weight of 800 g, nearly twice that of its parents, in the second week of April (Lill and Baldwin 1983: 897).

In the second week of April the chicks begin to emerge from burrows at night to attempt to fly. They wander around and may enter any burrow during the day, generally moving closer to the sea prior to departure. This 'travel' phase is recognised by muttonbirders who may go over the same area up to three times during the season. Chicks leave from the third week in April to the first week in May at night, swimming out to sea if conditions are calm. The presence of strong winds facilitates departure but also results in chicks that are not yet fully developed leaving too early and later perishing at sea.

Chicks tend to return to their natal rookery (Serventy *et al.* 1989: 429), but there is probably much exploration of other areas by young birds before they breed. For example, in any year only 40 percent (range 16-61) of the breeding population on Fisher Island is made up of birds hatched on Fisher Island (Serventy and Curry 1984: 77). However, once they begin to breed at a specific rookery, muttonbirds have a very strong tendency to return to breed in that rookery until death (Serventy 1967: 180).

Muttonbirds breed for the first time at 4-15 years of age, the mean for males being 7.3 and females 7.0 years. Mate retention appears related to reproductive performance. Some 33 percent of all pairs which failed to produce an egg in the preceding season changed partners by divorce. However, the divorce rate was down to 23 percent in pairs which produced an egg but which failed to hatch and 15 percent in birds which fledged young (Bradley *et al.* 1990: 489; Wooller *et al.* 1988: 850). During the completed lifetimes of 418 male and female shearwaters, 27 percent of all individuals produced no young and 19 percent only one young. Overall, 71 percent of birds produced no offspring that returned to breed. In fact 8 percent of all birds that had completed their reproductive careers produced 53 percent of all young that returned to Fisher Island to breed and 26 percent of all birds were responsible for all reproducing offspring. Shearwaters that formed known pairs produced on average 5.3 eggs, 3.1 fledglings, and 0.43 reproducing offspring each on Fisher Island (Wooller *et al.* 1988: 853).

The breeding success (the ratio of chicks fledged to eggs laid) of young birds 6 years old or younger during their first attempt (38 percent) was markedly lower than that of birds starting at 7 or more years (58 percent) (Wooller *et al.* 1988: 849). Thereafter breeding success improved with increasing familiarity with a particular partner, and the number of

previous mates (Wooller *et al.* 1989: 414). Throughout Tasmania, annual breeding success is about 60 percent (Naarding 1979: 19, 1980: 37, 1981: 12; Skira and Wapstra 1980: 237).

Mortality

Mortality is age-related. Mean annual mortality (\pm SE) is 7.8 ± 1.5 percent in male and 10.6 ± 1.8 percent in female shearwaters in the year of first recorded breeding, decreasing to 6.6 ± 2.1 percent and 7.6 ± 2.3 percent after 9 years, rising to 12.7 ± 1.9 percent and 15.6 ± 1.8 percent after 18 years. The median survival time is 9.3 years after first breeding (Wooller *et al.* 1988: 853), although three birds on Fisher Island are known to have been at least 36, and one 38 years old (Murray 1991: 44). More vigorous birds, as measured by their survival and reproductive success, may tend to have a greater reproductive output earlier in life, whereas individuals of lower vigour may produce less offspring and die earlier. However, among birds which have bred for fifteen years, those that had fledged fewer young had a slight, but significantly higher survival rate over those that had produced more offspring (Bradley *et al.* 1989: 175; Wooller *et al.* 1990: 166).

The greatest mortality (52 percent) occurs in the first year of life (Serventy 1967: 185). In some years large numbers of muttonbirds are beach-washed onto Japan as easterly winds blow weakened birds westward off their normal route. Autopsies have established that death is due to starvation and that the majority are fledglings (Nishigai *et al.* 1981: 88; Oka and Maruyama 1986: 100). On the return trip annual mortalities are inversely proportional to fluctuations in plankton abundance in the Tasman Sea (Serventy *et al.* 1971: 130). Autopsies on fourteen shearwaters found dead along one Tasmanian beach in December 1983 showed that death was due to starvation (Skira unpublished).

Natural causes of mortality are predation, disease, starvation and flooding of low-lying nesting areas. Quite severe mortality among chicks occurs in some years by a condition known as 'limy-bird disease'. This is caused by blockage of the lower part of the alimentary canal by concretions of sodium urate (Mykytowycz 1963: 69). However, the major threat to muttonbird populations is human activity with often disastrous effects. The introduction of pigs in the early years of European settlement in the Furneaux Group is said to have extirpated whole rookeries on Woody and Vansittart Islands (TPP 1908. Number 57: 1). Cattle and sheep trample in burrows, while winter firing of silver tussock exposes the soil to westerly gales, reducing soil depth for burrowing and allowing fire-invading plant species to colonise. The principal invader is *Senecio*

capillifolius which is endemic to the islands of the Furneaux Group. It has good soil holding qualities and eventually allows silver tussock to re-colonise. *Senecio* dries out in summer and splinters, but this does not appear to affect the muttonbirds, although it makes it uncomfortable for muttonbirders to reach inside burrows for chicks.

Apart from muttonbirding, which takes approximately 300,000 chicks each year in Tasmania, the biggest threat are the Oriental gillnet fisheries in the North Pacific. The Japanese fishery drowns between 131,000 and 281,000 muttonbirds annually (King 1984: 711; Ogi 1984: 719). Other countries involved include Korea and Taiwan. The effects of salmon and squid fisheries in the north Pacific Ocean are not known, but they operate in areas through which large numbers of muttonbirds pass during migration. The United States and Canada are currently developing observer programs with Japan, Korea and Taiwan to look at the accidental by-catch in squid gillnet fisheries in the North Pacific (Patrick Gould, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Alaska, personal communication).

Small plastic particles are commonly found in stomachs of seabirds (Azzarello and Van Vleet 1987: 295). A high proportion of muttonbirds contain plastic particles in their stomachs on their return to the southern hemisphere but lose them as the season progresses (Skira 1986: 486). The effects of plastic ingestion are unknown but there is some suggestion of a link between high amounts of plastic ingested and decreased physical 'health' in muttonbirds, particularly when in the northern hemisphere (Day *et al.* 1985: 379). This 'impairment' has not yet been measured.

SUMMARY

The first use of petrels as food in Australia saved settlers on Norfolk Island from starvation in 1790. The wedge-tailed shearwater was one of the two petrels captured for food. The word 'muttonbird' was coined because the wedge-tailed shearwater was said to be remarkably fat, and the taste of its meat resembled that of sheep. Within a short while, the term was applied to the very numerous short-tailed shearwater which bred in huge rookeries around the coasts and islands of southern Australia. By the 1830s the term 'Tasmanian muttonbird' was common.

Because of its abundance and use as an economic resource, the muttonbird quickly came to the attention of naturalists. They recorded details of its biology which were later confirmed by scientific research. Approximately 23 million birds breed in about 250 colonies in southeastern Australia from September to April. The large extent of their

feeding grounds and limited suitable nesting areas has resulted in several very large rookeries, of which Babel Island, with 2.86 million burrows is the largest. The reasons for their great abundance is unclear. The muttonbird commences to breed between the ages of four to fifteen years. During their completed lifetimes 27 percent of all individuals produce no young and 19 percent only one chick. Mortality is age-related with the median survival time for breeding being 9.3 years after first breeding.

CHAPTER 2

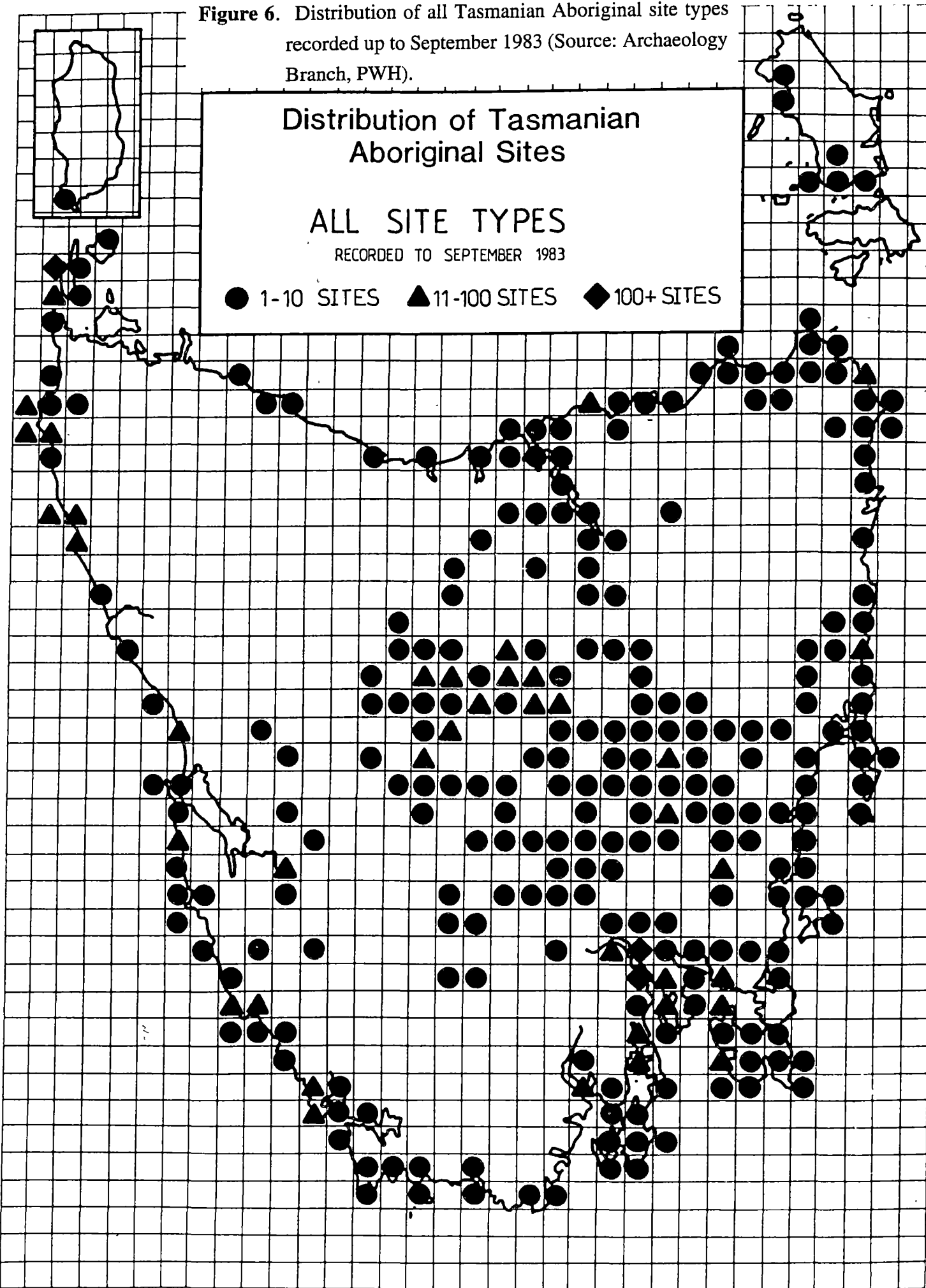
EXPLOITATION OF MUTTONBIRDS BY NON-EUROPEANS

"The natives was much delighted at landing here. They lost no time ere they sought after and obtained a large quantity of birds which they partook of. Of this food they are very fond" (Robinson 1966: 330).

About 23,000 years ago Aborigines began a temporary occupancy of Cave Bay Cave on Hunter Island (Bowdler 1984: 1). This is one of the earliest evidence for human occupation in Tasmania or its near offshore islands. By 20,000 BP when Tasmania was still connected to mainland Australia, Aborigines were regularly inhabiting at least the southwest region of Tasmania. These ice-age hunters were then the most southerly humans on earth (Kiernan *et al.* 1983: 4). The present Tasmanian coastlines were formed 7,000 to 6,000 years ago, although there are coastal midden sites in Tasmania dating to 8,000 BP that were well above sea level then, but still 'coastal' (as they are today), such as on headlands surrounded by deep water, for example (Jones 1971: 281; Reber 1965: 266). By the time of European contact, Aborigines had colonised virtually all of Tasmania, as evidenced by the widespread location and great number of archaeological sites (Figure 6). The total population at contact was 9 tribes containing about 4,000 people (Jones 1977: 321).

The Aborigines were a hunter/gatherer people whose technology was simple and adequate to enable them to adapt successfully to the wide range of Tasmanian environments. Their economy was mainly marine orientated for at least certain periods of the year, and the coast was visited by every Tasmanian tribe at some stage of its seasonal movements (Jones 1977: 329). Those who lived along the northwest and southwest coasts, perhaps camping at times near muttonbird rookeries, relied on shellfish and foods such as seals, birds and land mammals that were available all year round, and used muttonbirds when in season.

Figure 6. Distribution of all Tasmanian Aboriginal site types recorded up to September 1983 (Source: Archaeology Branch, PWH).



Environmental and cultural adaptations through time by the Aborigines led to a type of settlement pattern and selective coastal hunting strategy similar to that of the Maoris in New Zealand, and Morioris in the Chatham Islands (Sutton and Marshall 1980: 43). In all these regions hunting strategies centred on the exploitation of fatty, meat-bearing resources at the time of year when they were most aggregated, easily taken and fattest. In broad terms, the hunting strategies focussed on seals, albatrosses, petrels and penguins. In Tasmania remains of muttonbirds have been discovered in archaeological sites on Hunter Island in northwest Tasmania, and Maatsuyker Island and Louisa Bay in southwest Tasmania (Table 1). Elsewhere in the world, remains are scarce.

NORTHWEST TASMANIA

Cave Bay Cave, Hunter Island

The Hunter Group is known to have been visited by Aborigines (Bowdler 1980: 1; Robinson 1966: 641). Cave Bay Cave on Hunter Island was the first archaeological site in Tasmania to be dated to the Pleistocene and has a 23,000 years discontinuous sequence of human occupation (Bowdler 1984: 1). There is no evidence for an earlier occupation. When Cave Bay Cave was first occupied the sea lay 25 to 30 km to the west and the cave was in a hill on the Bassian plain. Surrounding vegetation comprised grassland and probably few if any trees (Hope 1978: 493).

Between 23,000 and 18,000 BP Cave Bay Cave saw intermittent but intensive use by Aborigines. They left behind tools of bone and stone. From 18,000 to 6,600 BP there appear to have been only rare visits as exemplified by a hearth, dated at 15,400 BP. From 6,600 BP to about 1,000 years ago the cave was occupied on and off with a period of extensive occupation between 6,600 BP until shortly before 4,000 BP. The site then appears to have been abandoned for 600 to 700 years when there is some sign of low-intensity usage. More intensive occupation resumed about 2,600 years ago. The cave was finally abandoned 1,000 years ago. A summary of the occurrence of muttonbird remains excavated from the archaeological deposit is given in Table 1. Bowdler (1984: 57) found that muttonbirds appeared to be evenly distributed throughout the upper layers of the site, but the only obvious evidence that muttonbirds were once an Aboriginal resource are the ten individuals (unburnt) found amongst the human refuse dated at 900 ± 90 BP. The other three sets of 25, 27 and 5 muttonbirds cannot be conclusively shown to have been a dietary item. The five muttonbirds accredited to the Pleistocene Upper Layer seem to have been derived from the Lower Midden deposit.

Table 1. Occurrence of Muttonbirds and other Seabirds in excavated Middens in Tasmania.

Site	Date (BP) & (Source)	Description
Cave Bay Cave	Upper Midden 990 ± 90 to 2580 ± 70 (Bowdler 1984)	10 muttonbirds, 1 little penguin, 3 albatrosses, 65 other Procellariidae
	Sterile Layer 3330 ± 100 to 3960 ± 110	25 muttonbirds, 178 other Procellariidae
	Lower Midden 3960 ± 110 to 7180 ± 90	27 muttonbirds, 1 little penguin
	Upper Pleistocene 6600 to 9,000	5 muttonbirds, 16 other Procellariidae
	Lower Pleistocene 19,000	3 Procellariidae
Muttonbird Midden	1000 (Bowdler 1979)	7 muttonbirds, 1 little penguin
Rookery Rockshelter	1370 ± 70 (Bowdler 1979)	14 adult muttonbirds and possibly 5 chicks, 3 other Procellariidae
Stockyard Site	760 ± 70 (O'Connor 1980)	12 adult muttonbirds, 1 little penguin, 11 diving petrels, 3 fairy prions, 5 black-faced cormorants, 1 Pacific gull
Little Duck Bay	800 to 1000 (Bowdler 1979)	7 muttonbirds, 4 little penguins, 1 shy albatross, 1 cormorant
Louisa River 1	2970 ± 200 (Vanderwal & Horton 1984)	27 muttonbirds, 7 shy albatrosses, 42 fairy prions
Louisa River 2	2580 ± 11 to 2830 ± 155 (Vanderwal & Horton 1984)	9 muttonbirds, 1 little penguin, 5 shy albatrosses, 6 fairy prions
Louisa River Cave 1	n. d. (Vanderwal & Horton 1984)	4 muttonbirds, 1 medium-sized penguin, 1 shy albatross, 1 fairy prion
Louisa River Cave 2	870 ± 90 (Vanderwal & Horton 1984)	28 muttonbirds, 3 little penguins, 1 small albatross, 46 fairy prions, 1 diving petrel
Louisa Creek 1	1250 ± 100 (Vanderwal & Horton 1984)	1 muttonbird
Maatsuyker Island	400 ± 90 to 570 ± 100 (Vanderwal & Horton 1984)	30 muttonbirds, 4 little penguins, 10 shy albatrosses, 60 fairy prions
Tasman Island	n. d. (Harris 1984)	muttonbird — possibly due to human occupation

Remains of 322 other Procellariidae found in the cave also showed the same trend. All but nineteen came from the layers dated at younger than 6,600 BP. Of these, fifteen came from immediately below the Lower Midden Layer (and are therefore younger than c. 7200 BP). Of the remaining four, one was from a unit dated at 15,400 BP and three from 18,850 to 22,750 BP. The Procellariidae were tentatively identified as *Pterodroma* spp. and *Pachyptila* sp., probably the fairy prion *Pachyptila turtur*, but were not shown to represent human meals. The fairy prion probably originated from Albatross Island where it nests in large numbers and is resident all year (Brothers and Davis 1985: 4).

The significance of these large numbers of seabirds is that they must have been caught and eaten by something else. Bowdler (1984: 75) considers that the majority were brought to the site by the peregrine falcon *Falco peregrinus*, which was using the cave as a nesting site. Falcon remains occurred throughout the Holocene deposits in small but consistent numbers.

Muttonbird Midden, Hunter Island

This shell midden is in the midst of a large modern muttonbird rookery. A large part of it has eroded due to the burrowing of muttonbirds and subsequent wind deflation by prevailing westerlies'. The site, which is basically a shell midden, revealed a chronological sequence of muttonbird rookery overlying a human occupation site, this in turn overlying a pre-historic muttonbird rookery (Bowdler 1974: 17). Bowdler suggested that this sequence showed a strong association of humans and muttonbirds.

Rookery Rockshelter, Hunter Island

At a small rock shelter about 30 m from the coast on Hunter Island and near the Muttonbird Midden evidence of human occupation was found, together with shearwater and other animal remains (Bowdler 1974: 17).

Stockyard Site, Hunter Island

This site consists of a shell midden situated almost in the centre of Hunter Island. It is approximately 2 km from both the east and west coastlines and has given a radiocarbon date of 760 ± 70 years (O'Connor 1980: 42). The remains of eight muttonbirds and one little penguin *Eudyptula minor* were found in the lower midden and unexpectedly none in the compact upper layer. Instead there were at least 212 pademelons *Thylogale billardierii*, 41 potoroos *Potorous apicalis*, and 42 brown bandicoots *Isodon obesulus*

(O'Connor 1980: 42). Bowdler (1974: 19) postulated that the absence of muttonbirds was either due to seasonal fluctuations, a change in cultural preferences over time or a decrease in the muttonbird population. None of these hypotheses was conclusively demonstrated.

The faunal remains from Stockyard Site have been analysed further by O'Connor (1982: 134). She calculated the approximate contribution of muttonbirds separately and then of all seabirds to the diet as a percentage of all vertebrate fauna consumed at the Stockyard Site. Muttonbirds contributed 0.23 percent and all seabirds including muttonbirds 1.87 percent.

The eleven diving petrels *Pelecanoides urinatrix* recorded at this site raises the same question as does the presence of muttonbirds, that is, how did they get into the archaeological deposits? Hunter Island seems a most unlikely site for diving petrels to breed, as they prefer smaller islands. However, for them to be present in Stockyard Site they must have been obtained from a nearby location, accessible by either land or sea. The nearest site is Steep Island, 3.5 km west of Hunter Island, where the diving petrel breeds in tens of thousands (Nigel Brothers, PWH, personal communication). No archaeological sites have been discovered on Steep Island (Jones and Allen 1978: 143). Diving petrels have been found in Pacific gull *Larus pacificus* middens on Bird Island, but no evidence of breeding has yet been found there despite intensive searches (Brothers, personal communication). Assuming no diving petrel colony existed on Hunter Island, then Aborigines may have travelled to Steep Island, obtained adults/chicks and subsequently ate them at Stockyard Site. As the petrels were distributed vertically throughout the Stockyard Site excavation, the Aborigines may have visited Steep Island frequently and eaten birds, including muttonbirds when in season, on the island. Quick stopovers would not necessarily leave behind archaeological remains that would survive to the present day. Further to this, remains of chicks of black-faced cormorants *Phalacrocorax fuscesens*, and Australian pelicans *Pelecanus conspicillatus*, are present in Stockyard Site. Cormorants presently breed on Hunter Island and pelicans on Penguin Island. The pelican colony has existed since at least the 1830s, and the island was once called Pelican Island (Plomley 1966: 231).

From the faunal evidence at Stockyard Site, Geering (1982: 146) attempted to establish seasonality of occupation by ageing teeth of pademelon. Her evidence indicated that a summer occupation of this site was most likely although a winter occupation could not be ruled out.

Little Duck Bay, Hunter Island

This archaeological site lies near an existing rookery and has an age of $1,000 \pm 60$ BP (Bowdler 1979: 329). A minimum number of seven muttonbirds were found. Also present were four little penguins and one shy (white-capped) albatross *Diomedea cauta*. Remains of fur seals were abundant.

SOUTHWEST TASMANIA

Maatsuyker Island and Louisa Bay

Southwest Tasmania is a rugged temperate region in the direct path of the roaring forties. It has a cool and changeable maritime climate, best described as harsh, especially in winter. The rugged coastline contains "fine sandy beaches...a succession of rocky headlands and deep gulches, punctuated at intervals with extensive inlets or promontories with sea cliffs" (Jackson 1979: 1). Behind the narrow coastline the land rises rapidly to jagged mountain ranges separated by extensive heath plains and thickets of forests interspersed by innumerable quick-flowing rivers and streams.

Aborigines appear to have mostly occupied the coastal plains which are covered by herbfield communities dominated by buttongrass *Gymnoschoenus sphaerocephalus*, and scrub such as *Banksia marginata*, *Acacia* spp. and paper-barks *Leptospermum* spp. and *Melaleuca* spp. From 21,000 to 14,000 BP Aborigines hunted and occupied inland sites for a considerable part of the year as shown by the recent discoveries of archaeological sites in caves and rock shelters along the Franklin River and elsewhere in the southwest of Tasmania (Allen *et al.* 1988: 76; Jones and Allen 1984: 86; Kiernan *et al.* 1983: 1). Within the last 3,000 years Aborigines mainly occupied the coast and coastal plains (Vanderwal and Horton 1984: 3). According to Jones (1977: 321), about 300 Aborigines who formed the Southwest Tribe roamed along 370 km of coastline. They made watercraft of paper-bark or stringy-bark *Eucalyptus obliqua*, to cross rivers and to visit offshore islands (Jones 1977: 322), including the 10 km passage to Maatsuyker Island, during the summer months.

Vanderwal and Horton (1984: 17) investigated several archaeological sites at Louisa Bay and Maatsuyker Island. Louisa Bay was shown to have been first visited around 3,000 years ago and then only in summer by Aborigines who took shell-fish, seals, muttonbirds, fairy prions, wallabies and wombats (Table 1). Around 1,000 years ago, Vanderwal and Horton (1984: 107) suggest, is the first evidence for winter and summer

use of Louisa Bay. Permanent occupation probably occurred from that time on. However, Sutton (1986: 151) doubts whether Vanderwal and Horton's limited excavations support their conclusion. From c. 1,000 BP until the advent of Europeans, the Aboriginal economy was quite diversified and visits to special sites like Maatsuyker Island were made to exploit the rich seal and muttonbird resources there.

Muttonbirds were present at most of the midden sites examined by Vanderwal and Horton (1984: 95) but they comprise a minor part of the diet in comparison to shellfish and seals (mainly Australian fur seal *Arctocephalus pusillus doriferus*, and some southern elephant seal *Mirounga leonina*) which were the major resources. At Louisa Bay the archaeological sites may have been situated to take advantage of a large muttonbird rookery on Louisa Island. This island is approximately 500 m wide and 700 m long. The birds are mainly found on the eastern side, and White (1980: 35) estimated the present population at 90,000 breeding pairs. At present Louisa Island is occasionally joined to the mainland and Aborigines may have walked to the island. However, the number of muttonbirds recovered from the sites is low compared to the number that may have been available from the island. Vanderwal and Horton (1984: 61) suggest that this could be because the rookery on Louisa Island may not have been large enough to provide large numbers of birds or access to the island may have varied in the past. However, great caution must be taken when speculating what the muttonbird population was 3,000 years ago. The rookery may not have even existed then and bird remains found in the archaeological sites may represent muttonbirds picked up from beaches, or brought back from Maatsuyker Island.

Two archaeological sites were located on Maatsuyker Island, one of which was excavated. A total of 6,858 muttonbird bones from the main excavations were analysed, representing a minimum number of 270 individuals. Further analysis showed that at least five percent of the bones were from nestlings. No very young bird remains were found though this could be due to poor preservation of immature bones rather than that very young nestlings were not taken by Aborigines. Vanderwal and Horton (1984: 21) describe Maatsuyker Island as one vast muttonbird rookery. Other seabirds that currently breed on the island are little penguins, fairy prions, diving petrels, black-faced cormorants and silver gulls *L. novaehollandiae* (Milledge and Brothers 1976: 34). The Australian fur seal does not breed but hauls out in several thousands on the island and nearby stacks (Brothers and Pemberton 1990: 567).

Maatsuyker Island is likely to have been visited in summer but the evidence based on muttonbird remains is not conclusive. Vanderwal and Horton (1984: 59) state that 7 out

of 100 muttonbird metatarsi belonged to nestling birds because the epiphyses had not yet fused. The bones of adults and nestlings were approximately the same size. Vanderwal and Horton do not distinguish between immature non-breeders (two years +) and older nestlings. They suggest that Maatsuyker Island was visited in March and April to gather older nestlings. Immature muttonbirds from the age of two years do visit rookeries at night in increasing proportions as they get older (Serventy 1967: 172). The evidence presented by Vanderwal and Horton (1984: 75) indicates that Aborigines may have visited Maatsuyker Island any time between October and April with some slight evidence that nestlings were taken in March and April. It is not possible to be confident that visits extended as late as April or even beyond, because the analysis of the muttonbird remains lacks precision (Sutton 1986: 150).

Analysis of other vertebrate remains may provide clues. Fairy prions presently nest on Maatsuyker Island but not on Louisa Island. As prions are present at breeding rookeries all year remains of adult birds give no indication of seasonality. About ten percent of remains from Maatsuyker Island and Louisa Bay were of nestlings. Vanderwal and Horton (1984: 61) suggest they were taken in January and February. As with muttonbirds, the fairy prion nestlings in sites on the mainland may have been either picked up from the beach, or brought back after being killed on Maatsuyker, or a breeding rookery may have existed in the past on Louisa Island.

With respect to the fur seals Vanderwal and Horton (1984: 48-51) obtained ages for 57 animals. Of these 32 were yearlings, 16 were aged 1-4 years and 9 were 6 years or older. The large percentage of yearlings and immatures in the excavated faunal assemblage suggests that Aborigines may have been present at any time of the year but probably summer. A greater precision cannot be given as no pups or mature bulls, and only a few mature females were present. The Australian fur seal breeds in November and December (Warnecke 1982: 440). The pups are suckled for a minimum of 11 to 12 months. Non-territorial males and subadult males are segregated in areas adjacent to the breeding site but a significant proportion of immatures of both sexes up to the age of three or four years are to be found among the breeding females throughout the breeding season.

However, recent study of fur seals in Tasmania has revealed that only the New Zealand fur seal *A. forsteri* breeds on Maatsuyker Island, and only in small numbers with 50 pups produced annually (Brothers and Pemberton 1990: 563). The Australian fur seal breeds only on islands in Bass Strait and after breeding, disperses around Tasmania.

Although Vanderwal and Horton (1984: 47) were circumspect about the identification of the fur seal remains, they thought they were most likely those of Australian fur seals.

Apart from Maatsuyker Island, archaeological sites on islands in southwest Tasmania have only been found on Muttonbird Island near the entrance to Port Davey (Brothers, personal communication). Sites are unknown on De Witt Island (Vanderwal 1979: 19) though evidence suggests that it was probably visited by Aborigines, as Flinders noticed that the vegetation on two of the De Witt Islands had been recently burnt when he sailed past in 1799 (Flinders 1801: 3). This island is now extensively burrowed by muttonbirds (White 1980: 5).

AUSTRALIAN MAINLAND

Great Glennie Island

Part of the Glennie Group, this island is approximately 4 km², while steep rocky cliffs up to 700 m almost encircle the island. Jones and Allen (1979: 5) made a cursory inspection of a cave and collected a small representative sample of deposit material which included remains of muttonbird and little penguin. They postulated that Aborigines occasionally visited the island in late summer to exploit the seal and muttonbird populations

Captain Stevenson's Point

This shell midden was on a prominence just inside Mallacoota Inlet (Coutts *et al.* 1984: 22). Remains of four *Puffinus* sp., most likely muttonbird, were recovered (Table 2). Three birds were unburnt and one was burnt, the latter indicating human exploitation and consumption. Also in the site were six albatrosses and one Australasian gannet *Sula serrator*.

Gabo Island

Fullagar (1984: 252) found no evidence of muttonbirding in the archaeological site excavated on Gabo Island off the Victoria coast. He speculates that the absence of birds is either because the site was not occupied during the muttonbird season or that sites associated with muttonbirding, presumably lying closer to the rookery, have yet to be found. Whilst no Aboriginal sites indicating muttonbird exploitation have been recorded on Gabo Island, the most likely explanation is that no rookeries existed there until

recently. The island was joined to the mainland until about 100 years ago (Reilly 1977: 51), and the muttonbird population has increased from about 100 pairs in 1959 (Gillham 1962: 57) to 6,000 burrows in 1978 (Harris and Norman 1981: 92).

Burrill Lake

The site is a large rock shelter situated in a valley several hundred metres inland and near a lagoon shore. One muttonbird bone was recovered from the top deposits and estimated to be 1,660 years old. Other seabirds present in the same deposit were one *Puffinus* sp., one *Pachyptila* sp., and one petrel (Lampert 1971: 12).

Table 2. Occurrence of Muttonbirds and other Seabirds in excavated Middens on the Australian Mainland.

Site	Date (BP) & (Source)	Description
Captain Stevenson's Point, Victoria	c. 650 ± 80 (Coutts <i>et al.</i> 1984)	4 <i>Puffinus</i> sp., 6 albatrosses, 1 Australasian gannet
Burrill Lake, NSW	1,660 (Lampert 1971)	1 muttonbird, 3 Procellariidae
Currarong, NSW	1,970 ± 80 to 3,740 ± 100 (Lampert 1971)	21 muttonbirds, 1 little penguin, 6 shy albatrosses, 1 Diomedae, 2 fluttering shearwaters, 4 petrels
Durras North, NSW	480 ± 80 (Lampert 1966)	Numerous bone-points, and unworked bone
Bass Point, NSW	Upper midden, 1,379 ± 150 (Bowdler 1970)	15 muttonbirds, bone points
Seton, SA	10,940 ± 160 to 16,110 ± 110 (Hope <i>et al.</i> 1977)	1 <i>Puffinus</i> sp., 1 broad-billed prion

Currarong

The site comprises a series of rock shelters in a gully close to the coastline. The minimum number of muttonbirds recovered from the archaeological excavations was 21 of which 15 came from shelter I with a radio-carbon date of 1970 ± 80 BP, 5 from

shelter II aged at 3740 ± 100 BP and 1 from shelter III which was not aged. Other seabirds present were two fluttering shearwaters *P. gavia*, one little penguin, six shy albatrosses *Diomedea cauta*, four petrels, and one albatross of the genus *Diomedea*. All these birds including the muttonbirds could have been picked up by the Aborigines from the nearby beach. Lampert (1971: 58) says that the muttonbird was almost certainly selected for food, while it is likely that the bones of the larger birds (in particular) were collected to manufacture bone tools.

Durras North

This is a shell midden deposit in a sea cave on the south coast of New South Wales near Bateman's Bay occupied into historic times (Lampert 1966: 83). Bones of muttonbirds were recovered throughout the excavation. The Aborigines probably gathered the birds from the nearby beach. Primarily, muttonbirds were a source of food at this site, although many were used for making bone points. Of 475 point-shaped pieces of bone recovered, 98 percent were bird bones of which 36 percent were of muttonbird. The bones of shy albatrosses and Australasian gannets were used to produce most of the other bone points. These seabirds were also probably gathered beach-washed. Lampert (1966: 102) surmises that the bone points were used in the manufacture of fish spears.

Bass Point

In this shell midden site on a peninsula 100 km south of Sydney, Bowdler (1970: 26) found bone tools of which some 20 percent were attributable to muttonbird. Bowdler (1970: 93) estimated that a minimum number of fifteen individuals were present, all of which were probably collected from the beach.

Seton

Seton rock shelter on Kangaroo Island off South Australia is situated in the foothills of a plateau approximately 15 km from the coast. One *Puffinus* sp. and one broad-billed prion *Pachyptila salvini* were recovered in a non-cultural horizon between $10,940 \pm 160$ to 16,110 BP (Hope *et al.* 1977: 367, 376). The *Puffinus* sp. may have been either the muttonbird or the fleshy-footed shearwater *P. carneipes*. Both occur in the seas around Kangaroo Island and muttonbirds breed on nearby islands. How the *Puffinus* sp. came to be found in Seton rock shelter is not known but Kangaroo Island has a long prehistory of human occupation, from 16,000 BP until 4,000 years ago (Lampert 1981: 23).

ABORIGINAL EXPLOITATION, POST 1803

Within a short time of non-Aboriginal settlement of Tasmania in 1803, the Aboriginal population was reduced by ruthless, often deliberate extermination and by disease (Ryan 1981: 3). By 1831 the remaining Aborigines were mustered by George Augustus Robinson and eventually taken to Settlement Point on Flinders Island to be cared for under government supervision. There, at the settlement which they called Wybalenna, escape was impossible. The settlement lasted only to 1847, by which time only 47 Aborigines remained alive. It was closed and the survivors removed to Oyster Cove near Hobart to eke out the rest of their lives (Ryan 1981: 203).

Gaughwin (1978: 20) has summarised contemporary Aboriginal muttonbirding from Robinson's journals. The Aborigines went frequently to the Hunter Group to collect muttonbirds. Robinson was told that they knew it was time to go to the islands when the blackwood or lightwood tree *Acacia melanoxylon*, flowered in early spring; they were reluctant to go when the birds were not present (Robinson 1966: 633). Gaughwin (1978: 13) says that the Aborigines were fond of adult birds, eggs and chicks for food, whilst muttonbird fat and red ochre were mixed together and smeared onto their bodies. As the birds were present for seven months and only found on islands, they were available to only a few tribes, principally (though not exclusively) to those living in northwest Tasmania, for Aborigines in that region had access to the islands in the Hunter Group. However, much of the contemporary use made of muttonbirds and details of how they collected the birds are not clear, as Robinson's journals were written 30 years after sealers had made contact with Aborigines, during which time considerable disruption to traditional ways had occurred.

Flinders Island was large and had ample fresh water and plentiful supplies of game and shellfish. For the benefit of the Aborigines at Wybalenna, Robinson arranged trading activities in which they obtained credits from muttonbirds, wool, kangaroo skins and the sale of their labour (Plomley 1987: 620). The muttonbirds came from the nearby islands. Sheep were kept on the small islands such as Big Green and Prime Seal Islands, while kangaroos were obtained from the surrounding bush.

The internment of the Aborigines was a "weep in silence" and the return of the birds each season was probably the highlight of each year's dreary existence. Robinson and his contemporary, Quaker benefactor James Backhouse, constantly referred to their pleasure in capturing the birds. Backhouse recorded on one occasion that it was a great joy for

Aborigines to go muttonbirding on Big Green Island (Backhouse 1843: 169). During the season birds and eggs were collected, mainly from Big Green Island, with lesser quantities from East Kangaroo, Big Chalky and Prime Seal Islands. The reason for this was that the muttonbird rookery on Big Green Island was very large compared to the other islands, and it was the official anchorage and staging post for boats coming to the settlement. It was thus visited often by officials and advantage was taken of these visits to collect muttonbirds. As many muttonbirds and their eggs as possible were taken during the forays by Aborigines:

...they had a feast of Mutton Birds and their eggs, and smeared themselves from head to foot with red ochre and grease. The multitude of birds returning to the island in the evening was so great that it was difficult to conceive how each pair would find a burrow. The Aborigines from Flinders Island had been here, and we learned that they had collected 8,000 eggs; countless numbers were, however, still left: they had also destroyed great numbers of birds, which were scattered in all directions over the island (Backhouse 1843: 169).

Backhouse also described the method the Aborigines used in cooking the bird, and this may have been a tradition from pre-contact settlement:

The plan they adopt in working them is, to throw the bird on the fire until all the feathers are singed off, when it is withdrawn and gutted. When several are prepared in this manner, they are spitted on a stick between two and three feet in length, one end of which is run into the ground, while the other enables the person who is standing by to turn the birds, or give them such a direction towards the fire as ensures their being properly cooked (Backhouse and Tylor 1862: 98).

Because the quantity of muttonbirds collected was so vast, they were frequently the staple food item for the settlement as a whole, not only for the Aborigines. When other game or provisions were scarce muttonbirds could be relied upon to overcome times of shortage. In 1834 the Aborigines were sent on three occasions to collect food, and it was only the timely arrival of muttonbirds that "saved the situation" when other game was so scarce (Robinson 1987: 79). Muttonbirds were eaten either fresh or salted, even though the Aborigines did not like salt meat (Robinson 1987: 626).

EXPLOITATION AROUND THE WORLD

New Zealand

Thirty two species of petrels and seven species of albatrosses breed in the New Zealand region (Kinsky and Robertson 1985: 309). Many of these species were once exploited by the native Maoris and Morioris (Scarlett 1979: 75; Davidson 1984: 136), and for the most part were taken from areas where they breed at present. In fact the inhabitants found almost every species edible and even ate beach-washed birds. Today only the sooty shearwater and grey-faced petrel *Pt. macroptera* are allowed to be taken by Maoris and their descendants (Wilson 1979: 7), and only the sooty shearwater may be sold commercially. The principal hunting grounds are the islands around Stewart Island. Occasionally the mottled petrel *Pt. inexpectata* is taken in association with the sooty shearwater (Robertson and Bell 1984: 574).

At a midden site at Tiwai Point which dates to the thirteenth century 177 out of a total of 392 birds were sooty shearwaters, and 138 were either immatures or sub-adults (Sutton and Marshall 1980: 34). The adult birds were preserved in the traditional southern Maori manner as the wings, legs and head had been removed, and the sterna were broken when the carcasses were opened up. However the evidence from Tiwai Point indicates that fledglings were not preserved but consumed immediately. There is no evidence of the larger scale preservation of chicks that is documented in ethnographic accounts (Davidson 1984: 137). The reasons could be that sites have not yet been discovered, or that these practices only developed to their full extent in European times (Davidson 1979: 237; 1984: 137). The sooty shearwater has also been recovered from other middens in New Zealand (Scarlett 1979: 77).

Until recently a number of methods were used for preserving sooty shearwaters (Richdale 1948: 101), one of which was to preserve them in casks called 'poha' made from bull kelp *Durvillea antarctica* (Best 1942: 331). The birds were either cooked in their own fat, salted or preserved by other means. Birds cooked or salted kept the longest. Today the season to take the birds is from 1 April to 31 May. Regulations specify that only chicks are permitted to be taken, including at night with the aid of a light and dog. The use of dogs and so called 'night-birding' are illegal in Tasmania. The practice of 'night-birding' occurs in the second half of the season as the chicks come out of their burrows and make their way to the coast at night. At such times they are easily caught. Health regulations also require containers in which birds are preserved to be

labelled clearly, showing the name and address of the owner and the weight and grade of the birds (Wilson 1979: 182). Such regulations do not apply in Tasmania.

The Morioris colonised the Chatham Islands from Polynesia and eventually formed a population of about 200 people. They were coastal hunter-gatherers where limitations of terrestrial resources brought about a dependence on marine resources, the most important of which were seals and seabirds. Their middens contain vast numbers of seabird bones (Sutton and Marshall 1980: 42). At the time of first human occupation the Chatham Islands were one of the most important breeding places for petrels in the world, with at least 16 species and possibly up to 21 species breeding (Bourne 1967: 6).

The short-tailed shearwater has been recovered from five New Zealand localities. Two in the Chatham Islands contained one muttonbird each (Sutton 1979: 129), and another at Tiwai Point contained two birds (Sutton and Marshall 1980: 34). They were probably gathered as beach-washed birds. Muttonbirds have also been found in middens on the South Island at Marfell Beach and on the North Island at Tom Bowling Bay (Scarlett 1979: 76, 81), again probably as beach-washed birds picked up by the Maoris.

Northern Hemisphere

Once it leaves its breeding rookeries in southern Australia, the muttonbird remains always at sea coming ashore only to breed the following season. In the Arctic region it is only found ashore as a beach-washed wreck. The two principal ethnic groups of the Arctic, the Aleuts and Inuits (Eskimos) would have found the birds difficult to procure and the scarcity of their remains in archaeological excavations probably reflects this.

The Aleuts did not eat muttonbirds, or only sparingly. Murie, an American ornithologist who spent a great deal of time working with Aleuts at several villages, does not mention harvest of this species by them. On the contrary, he says that the inhabitants of St Lawrence Island have certain taboos in connection with eating the bird (Murie 1959: 42). In the journal of Father Ivan Veniaminov, a Russian Orthodox priest who spent many years working with and converting Aleuts in the early 1800s, the Aleuts had a generic term, 'Fulmar', that may be applicable to several species in the Procellariidae, as well as the fulmar (Veniaminov 1984: 36). Robert Day (United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Alaska, personal communication) says that the Aleuts tended to have a name for each species of plant and animal that they used, and tended to use generic terms for species or groups of species that they did not consider important. We may safely conclude that muttonbirds were not important to the Aleuts.

The information on use of muttonbirds by the Inuits is conflicting. Portenko (1981: 70) states that despite shearwaters being present in large numbers they are not eaten by local people. He gives the reasons as lack of meat on the bird and that the fat is scanty. However, muttonbirds have been found in pre-historic Inuit sites (Friedmann 1934a: 87; 1934b: 231; 1941: 405). They are represented by a coracoid each from St Lawrence Island (2,000 years old) and Amaknak Island (probably 1,000 years old). Friedmann (1941: 405) concludes that, because of the scarcity of remains, muttonbirds were rarely eaten by the Inuits of the Cape Prince of Wales region.

Robert Day (personal communication) states that Dr Francis Fay, who, until recently, lived for many years with Inuits on St Lawrence Island, has stated the Inuits do hunt muttonbirds and find them to be "very fat and very tasty". Day quotes Dr Fay as saying that Murie probably obtained his information that they were taboo second-hand.

There is no evidence that the Japanese ate shearwaters. The birds would only have turned up as beach-washed wrecks, a frequent occurrence along the east coast of Japan (Oka and Maruyama 1986: 97). Until recently the Japanese harvested small numbers of streaked shearwaters *Calonectris leucomelas*, which breed in large numbers, mainly on offshore islands of Honshu. The practice has been discontinued as the Japanese have become aware of their conservation value.

DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

Archaeological excavations in Tasmania suggest that, in prehistory, muttonbirds were only present on islands, as they have not been found in coastal middens on the east and north coasts of Tasmania. The Tasmanian Aborigines crossed to the islands by canoe-raft and occasionally by swimming (Bowdler 1980: 14; Jones 1976: 238). Robinson was informed by northwest Aborigines that:

The elderly natives know this place (Hunter Island) well and have names for all parts of this and the other island. They crossed over from Cape Grim to Trefoil, thence to an island midway between Trefoil and the Hunter, and thence to the Hunter; crossed over in catamarans (Robinson 1966: 641).

These canoe-craft were inadequate for reaching more distant islands, such as the Furneaux Group, King Island and possibly the Kent Group (Jones 1977: 326). As canoe-rafts were not used by tribes in northeast Tasmania, the large muttonbird rookeries

around Flinders Island remained unexploited until sealers penetrated in the late eighteenth century. Archaeological sites are present on Flinders and King Islands with a possible site in the Kent Group also (Sim 1989: 35-36; Jones and Lampert 1978: 147; Orchiston and Glennie 1978: 130). Up to 6,500 BP small groups of people lived on Flinders Island, but probably not more than 500 people in total, given the area of the island and assuming population densities as in Tasmania at contact (Jones 1976: 258). The Aboriginal populations either died out or else abandoned the islands when rising sea-levels severed the land bridge, and the limited water crossing abilities of the canoe-rafts prevented re-colonisation (Sim 1989: 39).

On Hunter Island, Bowdler (1974: 17) discovered what she considered to be a prehistoric muttonbird rookery in the Muttonbird Midden Site. As we have seen in Chapter 1, the rookeries on Betsey and Slopen Islands were probably non-existent over 100 years ago and Aborigines would not have visited these islands for muttonbirds, as has been implied (Gaughwin 1978: 38). Because we have no knowledge of the precise prehistoric distribution of muttonbird rookeries, interpreting their use by Aborigines on present distribution could be grossly misleading. Despite the problems inherent in trying to establish past Aboriginal muttonbirding activity in relation to the present locations of rookeries, this is often done by archaeologists (eg. Gaughwin 1978, Jones 1976, Vanderwal and Horton 1984), and the results are often misleading.

During the last ice-age Cave Bay Cave was at least 60 km from any muttonbird rookery on Hunter Island (Jones 1987: 28). It seems unlikely that 19,000 years ago Aborigines would have carried birds to the cave. Instead, Bowdler (1984: 77) suggests, they may have been caught by mammalian predators such as the thylacine *Thylacinus cynocephalus* or Tasmanian devil *Sarcophilus harrisii*, and in the last 6,600 years by the peregrine falcon. A likely scenario is that muttonbirds were blown inland by a gale or wandered off course on the commencement or end of their migratory flight and were captured by falcons. A similar situation exists at Beginner's Luck Cave in Southern Tasmania where remains of one sooty shearwater dated at $20,150 \pm 1,790$ BP were found (Van Tets 1978: 1). This cave is presently 100 km inland and was much further away from the sea 20,000 years ago. Van Tets (1978: 1) suggests that it was blown inland or wandered there and eventually ended up in the cave. Nowadays muttonbird chicks often become lost over inland southwest Tasmania when they begin their migration.

On mainland Australia Aborigines had limited access to muttonbird rookeries because they were usually on remote, relatively inaccessible islands (Jones and Allen 1979: 6). However the islands adjacent to Wilson's Promontory, namely Rabbit, Doughboy and

Bennison Islands, and the Glennie Group have rookeries of muttonbirds, little penguins, cormorants and silver gulls. Ethno-historical accounts indicate that some were known to be visited during the early nineteenth century for muttonbirds by Aborigines (Coutts 1970: 125).

The Wilson's Promontory area belonged to the Bantualung clan of the Kurnai tribe (Coutts 1970: 1). They showed seasonal mobility depending on what food was available and were, typical of a hunter/gatherer culture. During the muttonbird season the Bantualung probably ate muttonbird eggs and took the birds. Rabbit Island was a favourite area and probably a regular source of muttonbirds. However Coutts (1970: 128) found no archaeological evidence of muttonbirding by the Bantualung and hence exploitation was likely to be at a low level. Coutts (1970: 128) also says that a wide range of food sources (including muttonbirds) was available on the western side of the Promontory, and hence their exploitation can be inferred.

The level of exploitation of muttonbirds can only be guessed as their remains have been found at relatively few archaeological sites in Tasmania and on the Australian mainland. The amount of material present is typically small in number and bulk in comparison to other vertebrate remains. There is no evidence that Aborigines in Tasmania had a set of rules concerning muttonbirding. They did not preserve birds for future consumption but used the meat immediately, whereas the Maoris of New Zealand had a tradition of muttonbirding and preserved some birds (Davidson 1984: 137; Richdale 1948: 92).

At Hunter Island there is no evidence of specialisation of muttonbird exploitation at coastal sites. All sites on Hunter Island contained many more mammal remains than bird remains, indicating that the Aborigines visiting Hunter Island placed a greater dependence on the land fauna than on petrels. Seabird fowling was incidental to the main food gathering activities of sealing, shell gathering or wallaby/mammal hunting and appears to have consisted only of the opportunistic capture of live or stranded birds from a range of species.

The possible reasons for the lack of muttonbird remains are varied. Perhaps other animals such as seals and wallabies were in greater abundance and were readily captured; perhaps muttonbirds did not breed in the same locations or in the same numbers as now; perhaps the Aborigines did consume large numbers of these birds but either the evidence does not survive or the particular sites with such evidence have not been investigated by archaeologists. The evidence suggests that if given the choice Aborigines preferred other readily available food resources to muttonbirds. According to Jones (1976: 254)

Aborigines went to the Hunter Group for muttonbirds and for shells for necklaces and to Maatsuyker Island for seals. This may have been partly the reason but the archaeological evidence from Hunter Island provides further reasons.

O'Connor (1980: 39) suggests that muttonbird eggs were the principal objective of Aborigines going to the Hunter Group. However, Bowdler (1979: 331) believes that the return of muttonbirds from their migration in September may have been the sign for Aborigines to go to the island to obtain seals and other foods; that is, the return of the birds was emblematic rather than the principle objective. The use of such signals from nature would not be unusual. Robinson (1966: 633) noted that the later Aborigines knew that it was time to go to the northwest islands when the lightwood tree flowered. Apart from providing a seasonal signal then, the pursuit of muttonbirds as the main reason for exploitation of islands appears to have been overstated.

CHAPTER 3

EXPLORERS AND SEALERS

"There were vast numbers of albatrosses on the isle to which their name is given...and being unaccustomed with the power or disposition of man, did not fear him: we taught them their first lesson of experience"
(Flinders 1801: 11).

The first contact with Tasmania by non-Aboriginals was by the Dutchman Abel Tasman on 24 November 1642, and the second, 130 years later in March 1772 when the Frenchman Captain Marion du Fresne arrived for one week (Taylor 1973: 4). From then until the first permanent European settlement was established on the Derwent River in 1803, a number of English and French navigators visited and stayed in Tasmania for short periods. They included Captain Cook who visited in 1777 in the course of his third voyage in the southern hemisphere and Captain John Cox in 1789.

The voyage of Captain John Cox was a maritime expedition in search of riches, with a keen interest in seals and whales. Cox had chartered the brig *Mercury* to sail to Canton where he had business interests. His voyage has the reputation of being the prelude to a massive and ruthless seal slaughter in Bass Strait for monetary gain (Taylor 1973: 16), which saw a vast industry developed for the sole purpose of hunting seals. The history of human relationship with seals has been one of destruction, and in hindsight, the Bass Strait sealing industry had many degrading characteristics. The sealers included ex-convicts and other "shady characters" who committed many aggressions against Aborigines on the northeast coast of Van Diemen's Land (Robson 1983: 75, 228). They treated Aboriginal women harshly, although several sealers formed liaisons with them and had children. Their descendants also earned a livelihood from exploiting the natural resources of Bass Strait; not seals, but the abundant populations of muttonbirds found on many of the islands in Bass Strait.

EARLY EUROPEAN CONTACT

The first cruise into Bass Strait was by Captain Tobias Furneaux in the ship *Adventure* during Cook's second voyage of discovery in the southern seas. Becoming separated from Cook in the Southern Ocean in rough weather, Furneaux continued on his own. Coming upon Bruny Island, he continued north along the east coast of Tasmania and sailed into Bass Strait for a short distance discovering the Furneaux Group of islands. He gave Cape Barren and the Sisters Islands their names, although he did not land upon them. Furneaux mistakenly considered Bass Strait to be a large bay:

From the latitude of 40° 50' South to the latitude of 30° 50' South is nothing but islands and shoals; the land high, rocky and barren...and it is my opinion that there is no strait between New Holland and Van Diemen's Land but it is a very deep bay (Furneaux 1973: 1).

The Furneaux Group remained untouched until 1797. On 10 November 1796 the merchant ship *Sydney Cove*, under the command of Captain Guy Hamilton of Glasgow, sailed from Bengal carrying a speculative cargo of 7,000 gallons of spirits and general goods. Near South Cape in southern Tasmania it sprang a large leak in a gale. Failure to stop the leak forced Hamilton to run for land (HRNSW III: 757-758), and on 9 February 1797 the *Sydney Cove* was beached between Rum and Preservation Islands. The crew came ashore on Preservation Island and erected their tents near muttonbird burrows (Cumpston 1973: 2). Approximately three weeks later, on 28 February 1797, seventeen of the crew sailed to Sydney for help in the ship's long-boat, leaving the others on the island (HRA I, III: 82, 710). Only three seamen survived the 600 km journey to raise the alarm. Governor Hunter sent the government schooner *Francis* to the rescue with a crew that included Matthews Flinders. Flinders was to return later on two other voyages of discovery and survey, on one of them accompanied by George Bass.

While the crew of the *Sydney Cove* awaited rescue their ration included muttonbirds and a daily allowance of a teacupful of rice. Muttonbirds begin to leave from the second week of April and are absent by the second week of May. Rescue for the crew of the *Sydney Cove* did not come to hand until 10 June 1797, so this food source aided the men considerably in their survival, and is the first record of consumption of muttonbirds in Tasmania by non-Aborigines. Flinders described their situation as follows:

The sooty petrel, better known at sea under the name of *sheerwater*, frequents the tufted, grassy parts of all the islands in astonishing

numbers. It is known that these birds make burrows in the ground, like rabbits; that they lay one or two enormous eggs in these holes, and bring up their young there. In the evening, they come in from the sea, having their stomachs filled with a gelatinous substance gathered from the waves; and this they eject into the throats of their offspring, or retain for their own nourishment, according to circumstances. A little after sunset, the air at Preservation Island used to be darkened with their numbers; and it was generally an hour before their squabbings ceased, and every one had found its own retreat. The people of the *Sydney Cove* had a strong example of perseverance in these birds. The tents were pitched close to a piece of ground full of their burrows, many of which were necessarily filled up from walking constantly over them; yet notwithstanding this interruption, and the thousands of birds destroyed, for they constituted a great part of their food during more than six months, the returning flights continued to be as numerous as before; and there was scarcely a burrow less, except in the spaces actually covered by the tents. These birds are about the size of a pigeon, and when skinned and dried in smoke we thought them passable food. Any quantity could be procured, by sending people on shore in the evening. The sole process was to thrust in the arm up to the shoulder, and seize them briskly; but there was some danger of grasping a snake at the bottom of the burrow, instead of a petrel (Flinders 1814: cxxxiii-cxxxiv).

The men lived in tents made of old sails, a miserable life due to the rain, wind and cold. On 1 May 1797 Hamilton ordered all hands to build a house for protection as a wild storm the previous week had blown the tents to pieces (HRNSW III: 759). Notwithstanding these deprivations the marooned sailors still had time and energy to explore as far afield as Swan Island (HRNSW III: 776-777), so named by Flinders on the authority of a *Sydney Cove* crew member who said that sometimes it abounded with black swans *Cygnus atratus* (Flinders 1801: 15).

On their return to Sydney Hamilton asked for Governor Hunter's help in recovering the remaining stores from Preservation Island. While preparing for this journey George Bass and his party of six seamen did a 900 km return trip down the coastline of Victoria in an open whale boat between 3 December 1797 and 25 February 1798 (HRNSW III: 32-33). They subsisted to a large extent on muttonbirds and salted down birds for the return journey collected from an island off Wilson's Promontory (HRNSW III: 325). It was from this journey that Bass hypothesised that a strait divided what is now Tasmania

from the rest of Australia, a hypothesis that was shown to be correct on his third voyage to the region, accompanied by Matthew Flinders.

Matthew Flinders left Sydney in the schooner *Francis* of 42 tonnes on 1 February 1798, charting and naming islands near where the *Sydney Cove* was beached (HRNSW III: 474; Flinders 1801: 22; 1814: cxxvii). He arrived back in Sydney on 9 March 1798 with the remainder of the *Sydney Cove* cargo, including rum, that had been stored on Preservation Island. On a third voyage from 7 October 1798 to 11 January 1799 in the sloop *Norfolk* Flinders and Bass circumnavigated Tasmania, again charting many islands and confirming the existence of Bass Strait (HRNSW III: 769-818; Flinders 1801: 33; 1814: clxix). They also revisited Preservation Island. The several fowls and pigeons kept by Captain Hamilton in the "house" he built "were not to be found, having probably fallen a prey to the hawks" (Flinders 1814: cxlvi).

During this voyage George Bass went ashore on Albatross Island in the Hunter Group, returning several hours later with a boat load of seals and albatrosses. He had been obliged to "fight his way up the cliffs of the island through the seals and when he arrived at the top, to make a road with his clubs amongst the albatrosses" (Flinders 1814: clxxii). On all three trips much use was made of the abundant wildlife. Seals, albatrosses, black swans and Cape Barren geese *Cereopsis novaehollandiae* were eaten, while skins of the little penguin were made into smart looking waterproof caps (Flinders 1814: cxxxiv).

Muttonbirds always figured prominently in Flinders' journals. He described their habit of coming in "from the sea in the evening, in numbers that surprise a person unaccustomed to them" (Flinders 1801: 27). They must have surprised him, for he had this to say about a flock observed on 9 December 1798 near Three Hummock Island, possibly one of the largest flocks anyone has ever seen:

A large flock of gannets was observed at daylight, to issue out of the great bight to the southward; and they were followed by such a number of the sooty petrels as we had never seen equalled. There was a stream of from fifty to eighty yards in depth, and of three hundred yards, or more, in breadth; the birds were not scattered, but flying as compactly as a free movement of their wings seemed to allow; and during a full hour and a half, this stream of petrels continued to pass without interruption, at a rate little inferior to the swiftness of the pigeon. On the lowest computation, I think the number could not have been less than a hundred

millions; and we were thence led to believe, that there must be, in the large bight, one or more uninhabited islands of considerable size.

Taking the stream to have been fifty yards deep by three hundred in width, and that it moved at the rate of thirty miles an hour, and allowing nine cubic yards of space to each bird, the number would amount to 151,500,000. The burrows required to lodge this quantity of birds would be 75,750,000; and allowing a square yard to each burrow, they would cover something more than 18¹/₂ geographic square miles of ground (Flinders 1814: clxx).

Matthew Flinders and George Bass wrote accurately about the natural history of the places they visited. Their observations form the base-line against which the effects of humans on the natural environment can be measured. At that time the islands (including Cape Barren Island) were thickly vegetated. George Bass depicted the vegetation of the islands as looking brown and starved, consisting of a few stunted trees and a low scrub that was almost impenetrable. There were tussocks and an abundance of low saltish plants, "chiefly of the creeping kind" (Bass 1798-1802: 148). After describing the kangaroos, shearwaters and snakes, Bass remarked:

I have seen but few of the low islands of Furneaux, yet I have no doubt that this account of Preservation Island, will answer in the main for the description of any of them (Bass 1798-1802: 152).

And according to Flinders:

The tall brush-wood is found in the inner and eastern parts of the islands, and the scrub on the western outskirts: a proof of the strength and prevalence of westerly winds (Flinders 1801: 27).

Until the beaching of the *Sydney Cove*, the Furneaux Group had been uninhabited for some 6,000 years (Sim 1989: 25). The birds and animals had no fear of humans, and not yet having suffered from human attack "...we taught them their first lesson of experience" as Flinders (1801: 11) ominously noted. The atmosphere of the islands can best be gauged from Bass's description of Cat Island upon which he landed on 8 January 1799:

They are three in number; the largest is high, rocky & barren; the two smaller are low, sandy and barren...I landed upon the outermost & found it well inhabited: the various tribes had divided it into districts. One was white with gannets, breeding in nests of dried earth and grass. Fearless and pugnacious the sight of many, only raised the clamour of repulses and aroused the spirit of revenge. Erected upon their legs, with half extended wings and threatening bills, they returned our attacks, with a fury and affect, that is altogether inconceivable. Petrels & Penguins had their underground habitation in those parts of this island which had the best claim to the title of grassy. The rocks of the shore and blocks of granite were tenanted by pied shags. Even this shy bird is rendered intrepid, by affections for its young, but it carries its best security in its own stinking carcass.

The Common Gull taught possibly by the necessity of frequenting harbours and the haunts of men, is ever cautious, ever suspecting. The whole district took flight upon our approach and hovering over our heads with clamorous greetings kindly repaid our refusal of their half animated eggs with showers of blossom, that from our sealskin caps fell like "Aaron's holy oil, upon our beards & garments." Geese, red-bills and Quail, live in common, the rest is appropriated to seals (Bass 1798-1802: 191).

The undisturbed nature immediately changed when the first non-Aboriginal people, the sealers, settled the islands to exploit the seals for profit.

The Sealers

When Matthew Flinders returned to Sydney with survivors of the *Sydney Cove* in June 1797 the entrepreneurial Captain Charles Bishop learnt of the new rich seal fisheries in Bass Strait. Although it was known several years earlier that seals abounded in the region, they had not yet been exploited (Roe 1967: xl). On their third voyage, Flinders and Bass in the sloop *Norfolk* were accompanied as far as Preservation Island by Bishop in the brig *Nautilus* of 60 tonnes. They left Sydney on 7 October 1798, and parted soon after Bishop pitched camp in Kent Bay at what is now called Nautilus Cove on the south side of Cape Barren Island. The arrival of Bishop began the first non-Aboriginal occupation of Bass Strait. The sealers made their presence known by planting seeds

which yielded "tolerable vegetables and probably gave rise to the seas of parsley now rolling over the area" (Roe 1967: xli).

During their three months at Kent Bay, Bishop's crew collected oil and about 200 skins a day from colonies about 30 to 50 km from their base. The colonies could have been either at Cone Point on Cape Barren Island where Flinders saw numerous fur seals, Gull Island (Flinders 1814: cxxvii), or Moriarty Rocks, south east of Clarke Island, on which Australian fur seals still breed today.

By 12 December 1798 they had collected 5,200 skins and 300 gallons of oil. Running short of provisions the *Nautilus* returned to Sydney leaving behind fifteen men to procure further skins and oil during the summer. They all returned to Sydney in March 1799 except a party of five that remained on Cape Barren Island over the winter of 1799. This wintering party collected 1,300 seal skins and 360 gallons of oil. Altogether about 9,000 seal skins were collected and sold in Canton. Bishop never returned to the Furneaux Group and is said to have become insane in 1802 (HRA 1, VII: 797). He died a pauper in 1810.

The sealers said that the most productive time for sealing was from November to May (Collins 1798-1802 II: 288). Fur seal pups are born during late spring and early summer, during which period the colonies are occupied by seals of all sizes and sexes. After breeding the male seals disperse from the breeding colonies, leaving behind the females to suckle their young for the remainder of the year. According to Flinders two types of seals were exploited. Hair seals, which appeared to frequent sheltered beaches, points and rocks, were recorded by him on Battery Island, Seal Point on Clarke Island and on an islet between Waterhouse Island and mainland Tasmania (Flinders 1814: cxxviii). The hair seals are considered to have been what are now known as sea lions *Neophoca cinerea*. The habitat of the fur seal was rocks and rocky points exposed to the buffeting of waves. Flinders (1814: cxxxiii) found these seals in any number only at Gull Island, Cone Point on Cape Barren Island, part of the Passage Islands and at the south end of Clarke Island (most likely Moriarty Rocks).

At the other end, in western Bass Strait, Captain William Campbell of the *Harrington* returned from a sealing venture to King Island on 14 December 1801 with 3,000 hair and fur seal skins and 2,500 gallons of seal oil. On his second trip he anchored at the New Year Islands until 27 May while his sealing gang obtained blubber and oil from 600 elephant seals, and skins from 4,300 fur seals (Cumpston 1973: 43, 45, 46). After

Campbell left, thirteen men remained behind to procure more oil and skins before the ship returned a third time.

The seal fisheries were vital for the fledgling colony of New South Wales as the colony had very few exploitable natural resources at that time (HRA 1, IV: 173). Governor King encouraged the industry. In a dispatch in November 1802, King noted that the small vessels that caught seals about the islands of Bass Strait belonged to a number of private individuals in the colony (HRA 1, III: 635). From the time he took command of the colony on 28 September 1800 to November 1802, 16,000 gallons of oil and 27,846 seal skins were imported into Sydney (HRA 1, IV: 249). Much of this produce came from Bass Strait. In fact King considered that a closed season might have to be established to prevent the destruction of seals and save the resource (HRA 1, IV: 249). This view had been expressed earlier by Flinders. The sealers hunted the elephant seal, at least two species of fur seals, and the sea lion. The elephant seal was only found at Sea Elephant Bay on King Island, New Year Islands and the Hunter Islands (Micco 1971: 21). The other seals were widespread throughout Bass Strait. Unfortunately the elephant seal and sea lion were wiped out within a few years, while the fur seals to this day have not recovered to their former numbers.

British, American and French ships joined the sealing in Bass Strait. The Americans did not linger long, as bad feeling was caused by their intrusion into what was regarded as a local industry (HRA 1, V: 173), nor were French sealers welcomed by the government. In December 1804 there were said to be up to 180 persons sealing in the Bass Strait islands (HRA 1, V: 202). The sealing gangs were left on islands to collect skins while the mother ships left with cargoes or to obtain provisions. Occasionally those left behind became destitute with only meagre provisions to carry them through to the return of the mother ship. The government therefore posted an order requiring a sufficient quantity of stores to be left with the gangs (HRA 1, V: 575), as it felt that sealers were dependent on the newly founded colonies in Van Diemen's Land of Port Dalrymple and Hobart Town for rescue if the mother ship did not return. The attraction of such a lucrative industry close to civilisation also gave the government concern about the number of men absconding from ships to go sealing.

Regardless of any official view, sealing was a way of life that attracted men to islands described as desolate, barren rocks with "not a vestige of verdure and even the hardy gum tree is unable to find the scant soil required for its support" (HRA III, 1: 774). Sealers suffered much imagined and real hardship to remain nine out of twelve months pursuing seals (HRA III, 1: 774). But they bore with it: thus the crew left behind by

Bishop during the 1799 winter reported that they had much fine weather during the winter months and that there had been very little frost or severe cold.

Sealing was an easily developed industry making slight demands on capital and labour, and requiring little sophisticated equipment (Little 1969: 111). The first requirement for sealing was a small ship of between 40 and 90 tonnes and perhaps a boat that sealers could use at the sealing grounds. Seals were either clubbed or stabbed to death, and the skins salted or pegged out to dry. Oil was obtained by melting down the blubber in large cast iron kettles termed 'try pots' and then stored in casks. Originally, most of the oil was procured from elephant seals. A number of the original try pots survived to be transferred later to the muttonbird islands for trying out muttonbird fat. They still exist.

From November 1800 to August 1806, 133,471 seal skins were imported into Sydney, the majority coming from Bass Strait (HRA 1, V: 769). Although the sealing industry was to continue for many years, by 1810 it had passed its peak, and by 1820 it was a minor industry. Under questioning by Commissioner Bigge, Mr T. W. Birch, a companion of explorer-whaleman James Kelly, stated in 1820 that some of the islands had been stripped of their seals or the animals frightened away, yet they were common on other islands (HRA III, IV: 461).

The sealers had to be virtually self-sufficient and their activities did not stimulate other sections of the economy (Little 1969: 111). The few minor benefits for the colonies were that it widened the employment spectrum and provided work for unskilled men requiring little if any training or capital. It also resulted in more knowledge being acquired of the Australian coastline. But the ability of the sealing industry to sustain economic growth was limited as there was no conservation of the seal stocks.

Sealers and Aboriginal Women

After the seals had been almost exterminated the organised groups of sealers were withdrawn and replaced by island dwelling adventurers who continued to catch the remaining seals. These island dwellers formed small units of several men with families born of Aboriginal women. They sold their seal skins and other produce such as muttonbirds and animal skins to vessels passing from Hobart Town and Port Dalrymple for slop clothing and spirits but achieved only a subsistence standard of living (Little 1969: 112).

The practice of using native women to do most of the physical labour of catching seals, kangaroos and muttonbirds began early in the history of Bass Strait. One of the earliest accounts is that of the boatman James Kelly who in 1816 circumnavigated Tasmania in an open whaleboat. Kelly was an entrepreneurial seaman with interests in sealing in Bass Strait, Macquarie Island and New Zealand, the obtaining of Huon pine *Lagostrobus franklini* from the west coast of Tasmania, and later whaling (Bowden 1964).

John Thomas Bigge (1780-1843) was Chief Justice of Trinidad when appointed in 1819 commissioner to enquire into the affairs of the colony of New South Wales. The inquiry arose from the British government's decision to assess the effectiveness of transportation as a deterrent to crime. Bigge's three reports led to the creation of a Legislative Council, separation of Van Diemen's Land from New South Wales, various legal reforms, and new provisions for the reception of convicts (*Australian Dictionary of Biography* Volume 1: 99-101).

In his evidence to Commissioner Bigge, Kelly described the sealers and Aboriginal women:

They generally take convicts in as they down the harbour, and proceed to the islands, where they subsist on kangaroo, wombat and emu. They also seduce the native women and have children by them, and instances have occurred of their purchasing them off their husbands in exchange for the carcasses of the seals after they have taken the skins off. They likewise sometimes carry them off by force and employ them in hunting kangaroos for their skins and also in killing seals, at which the women are very expert (HRA III, III: 462).

In further evidence, Kelly described the relationship:

The custom of the sealers in the straits was that every man should have from two to five of these native women for their own use and benefit, and to select any of them they thought proper to cohabit with as their wives; and a large number of children had been born in consequence of these unions — a fine, active and hardy race. The males were good boatmen, kangaroo hunters, and sealers; the women extraordinary clever assistants to them (Kelly 1964: 37).

Kelly's statements do not portray the hardship under which the Aboriginal women lived. The observations of Backhouse probably summed up the state of affairs:

She made signs of being stripped, stretched her hands up against the wall, in the attitude of a prisoner tied up to be flogged and made a doleful cry and then personated a flagellator in the discharge of his duty. After this she exclaimed in her own language; Oh! I will clean the Mutton Birds, better, representing the words mixed with cries and lamentations; at the same time representing a person striking her over the back and legs and herself sinking on the ground and her voice gradually sinking as if through exhaustion.

With the exception of Jumbo, the women with the sealers appear to have been kidnapped by them, with greater or less degree of violence; and to be kept by them as slaves, unless their cohabiting with them can be considered as raising them above a state of slavery. They teach the women to row and manage their boats; and compel them to hunt for them and to pluck mutton birds (Backhouse 14 October 1832).

George Robinson succinctly described the women's situation as akin to that of slave labour, when he learnt from the Aboriginal women that:

"The men [sealers] make them work too much; fetch wood, plenty of wood; hunt kangaroo; clean skins; club seals; kill mutton birds and salt them; row in the boats; hunt badgers, porcupines, kangaroo etc. (Robinson 1966: 301).

The women were thus used as sealers' chattels, and although some affection probably developed between sealers and Aboriginal women, the bonding was rarely deep or everlasting. The cultural differences between the two groups were great and never reconciled. The removal of Aboriginal women by sealers to the new environment of the Furneaux Group where Aborigines had last been 5,000 years previously would not have inured them to the demands of their white masters. The Aborigines lost their dances, corroborees, language and most of their freedom. Backhouse sensed this, remarking in his journal that although the "women had not the aspect of persons suffering from hard usage, yet they did not talk and they looked dull" (Backhouse 8 October 1832). When he asked the sealers why they were not married to the women, Backhouse was told that the sealers objected to becoming married to them, because of uncertainty about whether the

seals and women would remain on these islands and the wish of the females every now and then to visit 'the main' (Flinders Island) or some other place.

For people to survive, men and women had to toil very hard and it was the women who bore the brunt of the work. Personal relationships were based on the sexual gratification of the men and the work routines were a debased 'slavery'. The women were not the property of one man but were passed around the sealers (Plomley 1966: 1010-1017), something over which they had little control as they could not escape from the islands (Backhouse 14 October 1832). We can safely conclude that forcibly becoming a sealers' chattels was not a welcome experience.

The Beginning of Permanent Settlement

By 1827 the once abundant seals on many of the rocks and islands had been virtually exterminated (HRA III, V: 700). As sealing became less attractive, the remoteness of the area and perhaps a desire for a more settled form of life saw settlements established on Preservation, Woody, Tin Kettle and Gun Carriage (later called Vansittart) Islands in the relatively sheltered seas of Franklin Sound. Gun Carriage Island covers an area of 446 ha, and was large enough to accommodate several sealers and their families, while Woody, Tin Kettle and Preservation Islands cover 90 ha each. The climate would probably have been similar to now — cool and temperate; frosts and snow rarely occur and average temperatures range from about 12°C in July to about 23°C in February; rainfall averages about 776 mm per year, although there are local differences (Edgecombe 1986: 97).

These small islands had also many attractions of position and natural resources. They were well wooded and provided ample firewood, while fresh water was available from springs. They also provided sheltered anchorages, garden land, small areas of native pastures for grazing animals, proximity to larger islands for game such as wallaby, proximity to the depleted seal colonies and above all proximity to muttonbird rookeries which provided both subsistence and a cash crop (Murray-Smith 1973: 173). The small islands also negated the need for fences to confine stock and could be easily cleared for grazing, if desired. If the sealers had settled on Flinders Island, fences would have had to have been constructed to restrict the movement of livestock.

The first permanent settlement may have been as early as 1820, and perhaps even several years earlier. The sealers who lived on the Bass Strait islands in the 1820s and 1830s were almost all non-Aboriginal males except for two 'half-castes', one Australian

mainland Aborigine, one Otaheite and one Maori (Plomley 1966: 1006-20; 1987: 415-416). Robinson and official papers do not record any non-Aboriginal women on the islands, but John Lee and his wife, both non-Aboriginals, are thought to have been in residence by then.

Sealers known to have been living in the Furneaux Group in the 1820s were James Munro (also spelt as Monro) who was there by at least 1824 (Begg and Begg 1979: 61), and perhaps as early as 1818 (Backhouse and Tylor 1862: 93; Plomley and Henley 1990: 54), Richard Maynard who arrived in the Straits about 1824, John Lee and his wife who had been in the Straits since 1826, Edward Mansell who was present in 1826, James Everett, and Thomas Beedon who arrived about 1825 (Plomley and Henley 1990: 73, 80, 89, 90). Robinson's and other official papers record the names of forty nine sealers, most of whom operated at some time in Bass Strait (Plomley 1966, 1987). By the late 1830s sealing had, to all intents and purposes, disappeared from the Strait. Unfortunately, nothing is known of the first sealers (if any) who retired to the Furneaux Group early in the nineteenth century, before the sealers named above arrived.

The lifestyle must have been healthy, for many lived to an advanced age. Plomley and Henley (1990: 59) state that the range of ages at death for fifteen sealers was between 36 and 104 years, the average being 69. This compares with the mean expectation of life in Australia of 47 years for males, and 51 years for females for the period 1881-1890 (Cumpston 1989: 95), the period for which vital statistics are first available. Since then average life expectancy has increased as infant mortality has decreased and health standards risen.

The sealers lived in rough huts, the description given by Robinson of those on West Hunter Island being typical:

The huts are delightfully situated in a valley in which runs a stream of fine water. There are three cabins neatly thatched with grass, and they have also a sort of mess room. There was a large puncheon full of seal skins. There was gardens fenced around, with cabbage, potatoes and turnips growing (Robinson 1966: 176).

On Preservation Island, Munro bred pigs and rabbits, and sold them to passing ships (Robinson 1966: 269). He produced excellent wheat, barley and potatoes and got his firewood from Cape Barren Island. On Woody Island a sealer, George Robinson, cultivated two acres of vegetables and cereals, and had fowls and pigs. Winding paths

through the scrub connected to all parts of the island. On Gun Carriage Island there were eight huts or cottages with large gardens, out buildings, numerous pigs, an excellent potato patch, goats and fowls. It was the main island of the sealers and a delightful place according to Robinson (Robinson 1966: 272). In one year, 25 hundred weight (1,280 kg) of potatoes were grown on the island (Robinson 1966: 325). Barilla, which is a collective term for several species of salt-bush in the genera *Atriplex* and *Rhagodia* spp. was collected and burnt for the purpose of making soap (HRA II, V: 702; Whinray 1981: 281), and also served with other plants for food. For example, barilla and *Correa alba* were used as native tea (Gunn 1842: 37), which Barnard, a surveyor who visited King Island in 1827 described as an acrid, stimulating drink (HRA III, VI: 267). Making soap and hunting produced a diverse economic base which, with the abundance of muttonbirds for six months of the year, gave the sealers a reliable, and seemingly endless resource to exploit.

VISITORS TO THE ISLANDS

The Visit of John Boulton, 1824

John Boulton, the first person known to record his experiences of the islands after Flinders and Bass, was an educated English adventurer who emigrated to Tasmania, but with little money. He had no particular desire for farming, and worked for nearly a year around Hobart Town, including helping out on his brother's farm (Begg and Begg 1979: 49). Desperate to get himself out of his financial predicament, John Boulton joined a schooner on a sealing voyage to Bass Strait in August 1824. He lived with the sealers for several months, and described his first meeting with them as follows:

At night two sealing boats came alongside, with their crews, consisting of 12 half-barbarous-looking fellows...the first enquiry was for grog, and "grog for skins" meaning that they would sell seal skins for spirits...

The crews who lay alongside of us had some women who remained in the boats clothed in a kind of jackets made of kangaroo skins, and some fine kangaroo dogs.— The sealing boats are built like a whale boat but are larger, the sealers themselves are a class of seamen who, growing disgusted with the control they are obliged to be under in a Merchant Ship, depend on sealing for a livelihood, and become generally so wedded to this kind of life, that they cannot leave it off, they live very hard, frequently eating shellfish, and fernroot when they are unable to get

other provisions, or to catch fish, — they (in the Straits) wear their beards long, and appear to have no inclination to keep themselves tidy; their general appearance is semi-barbarous, and they are people *usually* who are fit for no other employment. They wear a kangaroo skin coat, caps of the same, and moccasins, (a kind of sandal fastened with thongs of hide)...after they had sold their skins, they left us, to ourselves (Boulton 1986: 13-16).

James Munro was one of the head sealers on Preservation Island, and when Boulton, who had experienced some harrowing adventures with the other sealers, met up with him, he could not but yearn enviously after Munro's peace of mind. Although living the rough life of a sealer Munro had become a genial person, the rough edges rounded off by the harshness of his life. Describing him as a singular character who came to New South Wales 34 years earlier, Boulton states that Munro wanted now, as he was getting older, "to make his peace with his Maker and end his days in quiet; his views were moderate, he solely wanted food and raiment; and contentment would make these, luxuries" (Boulton 1986: 18). Munro still had 20 years ahead of him before his death in 1845. He acted on the other sealers' behalf when George Robinson attempted to take their Aboriginal women from them (Plomley 1966: 457), and he must have given some impression of authority, because he was one of the few people that Robinson left alone and did not attempt to persuade to his views.

From the Furneaux Group, Boulton sailed to King Island and to seal islands off Victoria. Disgusted with his fellow companions he tried a solitary existence on Phillip Island but found it full of deprivations. He inadvertently destroyed an entire muttonbird rookery on the island:

When I arrived at the place where we first saw the 3 sealers I made a fire, and put a bird on a wooden spit to roast for my supper, but wearied out I fell asleep alongside of a large blazing fire, on waking, I found the whole island in a blaze, and the wind driving the flames along with great rapidity; my feet were a little scorched, and it was very providential that I lay to windward of the fire, instead of to leeward or else I should have been burnt to ashes and spared the many chequered scenes, and vicissitudes which succeeded.

On going my rounds for my daily food, I found the whole Mutton bird rookery burnt up, and the birds also, some were apparently running to

get to the water side out of the way of the fire, when they were burnt — the eggs were ready roasted for me, and of these I collected several, which served me some days, when I was obliged to hunt penguins; these birds are larger than the Mutton birds but of inferior flavour, being rank and fit only for persons who are absolutely starving, and since I was taken from off the island, I have been sickened at the smell of them. Sometimes I had difficulty in catching these birds, they would get into the hollows and caves of the rocks, out of my reach, and on these occasions, I used to run a long wooden spear through them, and haul them out at the end of it (Boulton 1986: 24).

The Visits of James Backhouse and George Walker, 1832

James Backhouse, naturalist and Quaker missionary, and George Washington Walker sailed for Australia from England in September 1831. They spent nine years in Australia attempting to arouse a social conscience among the inhabitants of each colony (*Australian Dictionary of Biography* Volume 1: 45-46). During their three years in Tasmania (1832-34), Governor Arthur found many useful tasks for them. These included investigations into penal settlements and into the Flinders Island Aboriginal settlement. Backhouse's imaginative and adventurous spirit was tempered by Walker's methodical nature. Backhouse's straightforward simplicity shows in his writings, and his pertinent observations on sealers, Aborigines and muttonbirding are as important as those of Flinders in terms of the insights provided into the impact of humans on the islands' natural environments.

In October 1832 the two missionaries made the first of two visits to Flinders Island. They first touched in the Furneaux Group on Preservation Island in early October 1832, approximately eight years after Boulton's visit. Here they found James Munro living with a Tasmanian Aboriginal woman named Jumbo who was only eighteen years of age (Backhouse 8 October 1832). In his journal, Backhouse described Munro's home life as follows:

...his hut is built of branches and the intertwining spaces filled up with grass and rushes; he has a piece of ground paled round as a garden, in which he grows vegetables of various kinds, and a second piece on which he grows corn etc. The corn he grinds with a steel mill. He has a second hut on the premises...he also rears goats, pigs and fowls; and by

means of these, added to the collecting of birds and their eggs, obtains a subsistence (Backhouse 8 October 1832; Backhouse 1843: 76).

At this time three other sealers from Gun Carriage Island and their Aboriginal women were on Preservation Island. Sealers also resided on Woody Island. Backhouse found the sealers very civil but did not hold them in high regard because of the contradictory statements they made about themselves (Backhouse 10 October 1832). He was given a guided tour of Preservation Island by a sealer named John Hughes, who resided on Gun Carriage Island. Hughes' woman, Sarah, gave the two missionaries a shell necklace each. The four Aboriginal women on Preservation Island were clothed in woollen frocks and great coats of wallaby or kangaroo skins worn with the fur inside. At that time of the year (October), the islands could be quite cold and windy.

Their second visit made two years later was a whirlwind inspection of facilities on several of the islands. No comments were passed about the Aborigines or their way of life.

GEORGE AUGUSTUS ROBINSON AND THE SEALERS

Backhouse and Walker had come to the Furneaux Group at the time that George Augustus Robinson was moving the Aborigines he had gathered around Tasmania to a permanent home at Wybalenna on Flinders Island. Robinson had been appointed by Governor Arthur to gather all the Aborigines he could find in Tasmania and then transfer them to a place where they would not be a 'problem'. Robinson succeeded beyond all expectations. He kept daily journals of his travels around Tasmania and his attendance of the Aborigines at Wybalenna, and these journals also provide detailed information on the origins and lifestyle of the early sealers.

George Robinson termed the sealers, 'Islanders' because sealing was no longer their principal occupation (Plomley 1987: 677). He felt that the sealers would have a negative influence on 'his' Aborigines and he tried by various means to get them off the islands. After trying for several years, in 1836 he managed to persuade Governor Arthur to pass an Act of Parliament requiring sealers and others to depart the Straits (6 William IV, No. 15, 1836, repealed by 26 Victoria I, No. 5, 1863), but it had little influence (Plomley 1987: 638). The sealers left Gun Carriage Island and sold their possessions, but they only moved to Clarke Island where they erected huts and began vegetable gardens (Robinson 1987: 373). It was not Robinson's intention to remove "better behaved" ones, provided they submitted to certain regulations, the most important of which was

that they would not be allowed to keep their Aboriginal women, and there was to be no destruction of muttonbirds (Robinson 1987: 378). Robinson wanted to keep the muttonbirds for the Aboriginal people, and was concerned at the sealers going to Big Green Island before he could send the Aborigines. His dealings with the sealers were based on direct instructions from the Governor:

I am directed to inform you that the Lieutenant Governor has approved of the man named "Riddle" being allowed to continue to reside at Gun Carriage Island and of his being allowed to build a boat provided his conduct shall not be objectionable and I am therefore to request that you will have the goodness to satisfy yourself from time to time of the correctness of his conduct and report any instance of misconduct should such occur (ML A7071/203).

Robinson had no means of enforcing the Act as he had no serviceable boat, so the sealers continued to move around, following the game seasons. Often when he called upon them at their homes they were absent. He and the sealers probably realised that each would have to tolerate the other's existence. Generally, they kept well away from the Aboriginal settlement, and only came to Flinders Island to obtain wallaby and other wildlife, principally wildfowl such as ducks and swans.

It was fortunate that Wybalenna and the sealers' homes were geographically isolated from each other. George Robinson's territory extended from Big Green Island to Wybalenna. Big Green Island was the location for the unloading of goods for the settlement and the main muttonbirding island for the Aborigines. In contrast the sealers lived on the islands in Franklin Sound. The muttonbird rookeries on these islands were utilised by sealers. Therefore in December 1837, a sealer named Smith told Robinson that he was killing muttonbirds on Great Dog Island, not for their feathers but to cure them to sell in Launceston for 41/2d each (Robinson 1987: 514).

Overall, it seems that the presence of the Aboriginal settlement was not a hindrance to the sealers going where they chose. They were seen on Big Green Island collecting muttonbirds and pegging out wallaby skins (Robinson 1987: 336). They went as far afield as Chappell Island, which was not visited by Aborigines from Wybalenna, to collect feathers once the muttonbirds had returned from their migration. They frequently went hunting on the Sisters, which the Aborigines also did, the presence of the sealers greatly annoying Robinson (Robinson 1987: 366). There was not much he could do about that except complain, which he did frequently. In November 1835 Robinson was

complaining that there was no game on Flinders Island, it having been greatly depleted by the sealers. He mentions the sealers taking their boats into all the lagoons on the east side of Flinders Island for which tracks had been cut through the scrub to get swan, duck and presumably any other wildlife that they came across (Robinson 1987: 511). It is arguable whether the alleged depletion of the game was entirely due to the sealers, because the Aborigines had a great number of dogs, many of which ran wild on the islands (Robinson 1966: 324).

Robinson also maintained that the sealers had caused immense destruction of the muttonbirds, and in this he was probably correct. The killing of adult birds for their plumage would probably have resulted in a decline in numbers, though this would not have been readily discernible to the sealers, nor even Robinson, because the huge numbers involved would render casual observations unreliable. In any case, his complaints went unnoticed by the Governor, and it was an unsatisfied Robinson who gave up his appointment at Wybalenna in 1839 to take up the position as Protector of Aborigines in Victoria.

Early European Impact upon the Fauna of the Bass Strait Islands

The first European visitors to Tasmania had an immediate impact on the island's environment through introducing plants, animals, burning the vegetation and exploiting the wildlife. Captain Cook released two pigs, and planted apple and other fruit trees at Adventure Bay on Bruny Island in southern Tasmania during his third voyage of discovery (Beaglehole 1967: 53). In 1802 when the botanist Robert Brown stepped ashore for several days of plant collecting on Deal Island in the Kent Group, he noticed several pigs roaming wild and that the island had been burnt prior to his visit (British Museum, Brown Journals 1803).

The white-capped albatrosses on Albatross Island were subject to slaughter for their feathers: Robinson was told that the sealers used to sell the feathers in Launceston at 2 1/2d per pound. They also collected albatross eggs for food, but did not take the birds themselves (Robinson 1966: 177). To this day the albatross population is only a fraction of its former numbers (Johnstone *et al.* 1975: 4), and was probably only saved from complete annihilation by the remoteness and difficulty of landing on the island.

The wallaby populations on the smaller islands in the Furneaux Group were predated upon by large numbers of wild dogs (Robinson 1966: 177, 271-272). It is apparent that

dogs were one of the principal feral pests of the early nineteenth century (they were also running wild on Macquarie Island in the subantarctic zone having been let go there by sealers also (Cumpston 1968: 35)). The dogs died out on the islands after some years, probably from starvation. In 1839 Captain Stokes released rabbits on Deal Island in the Kent Group (Stokes 1846: 424). The problems that foreign introductions would later cause were not understood in those days (*cf.* Rolls 1969: 210).

With respect to the seal populations, the elephant seal and sea lion became extinct, while the fur seals only survived because they were few in number and inhabited remote stacks and it was uneconomical to exploit them. The governor of New South Wales expressed concern about the extent of the slaughter of seals in Bass Strait (HRA 1, IV: 249), but nothing was done. Other species were also reduced in numbers, though the muttonbird population was probably not seriously damaged during this first phase of large-scale exploitation: they were saved from over-exploitation because they bred in huge numbers on many rookeries. There were no laws at the time to prevent the exploitation of wildlife to the point of extinction.

SUMMARY

Soon after the settlement of the colony of New South Wales in 1788, the sealing grounds of Bass Strait were discovered. Matthew Flinders and George Bass charted and explored the islands while the sealers were actively pursuing their prey. The two explorers noticed the abundance of muttonbirds and other wildlife. Within twelve years, by 1810, seals had become uneconomic to exploit by large sealing gangs. By the time Church of England missionaries made irregular visits to the islands in the second half of the nineteenth century (following chapters), the 'sealers' were so in name only, sealing having given way to less arduous ways of making a living. Initially, the natural environment of the Bass Strait islands sustained their lifestyle because the human population was small and dispersed. But within a short period of arriving in Bass Strait the sealers and explorers had affected almost every island they landed upon.

Some sealers stayed on, eking a living by bartering seal and wallaby skins and any other produce to passing ships for spirits and other items. These men took tribal-born Tasmanian and mainland Australian Aboriginal women for 'wives'. A little community was already well established when George Augustus Robinson, in the early 1830s, brought the remnants of the Aboriginal population from mainland Tasmania to spend the last few years of their lives on Flinders Island.

The sealers did not like Robinson's authoritarian ways, but managed to cope by living on and using separate regions of the islands. The sealers were also not regarded highly by visitors, who lamented the treatment of their Aboriginal women. By the end of the 1830s, the Aboriginal settlement established by Robinson was nearing its end as the Aborigines incarcerated in it died. Within a few years, the sealers and their families were again on their own. They attained some economic livelihood through the catching and selling of muttonbirds.

CHAPTER 4

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES IN THE FURNEAUX GROUP, FROM 1840 TO PRESENT

"Perhaps there is no part of Australasia where life can be lived so easily and inexpensively. Kangaroos, wallabys, wild cattle and pigs, ducks and swans abound. The sea swarms with fish...a region where, in one sense, it is "always afternoon" (Church News 1 April 1891: 444).

This chapter examines the population shifts in the Furneaux Group, concentrating chiefly on the Aboriginal population. In general the pattern is one of movement from the smaller islands to concentration upon Cape Barren Island, with a dispersal from there to Flinders Island and mainland Tasmania from the 1960s.

We have hitherto been discussing two separate groups of island people: 'sealers' and 'Aborigines'. But it needs to be borne in mind that several of the sealers had Aboriginal 'wives'. After Robinson's departure from Wybalenna the sealers and their families continued to occupy islands in the Furneaux Group. The genealogy of their descendants, today also termed 'Aborigines' (and henceforth in this thesis), has been detailed by Tindale (1953) and Mollison (1974), who established that all of today's Cape Barren Island descended Aborigines were begot from nine tribal-born Tasmanian Aboriginal women, four tribal-born Australian Aboriginal women and one Maori woman from New Zealand, who associated with some twelve white sealers of European origin (Tindale 1953: 4). From this initial group came 30 first generation Aborigines. The names of the main families were Beedon, Everett, Mansell, Maynard, Smith and Thomas. No one then called them Aborigines. The sealers and their families were frequently termed, 'Straitsmen' or 'Islanders', and their descendants as 'half-castes'. The application of the term 'Aborigine' for these people is a modern classification for any person who is descended from this small pool of white sealer — tribal-born Aboriginal woman liaisons.

ABORIGINALITY

At this stage of the thesis it is relevant to discuss briefly the substance of Aboriginality. Prior to 1967 tribal-born Aborigines were classed as separate citizens from the rest of Australians, by not being included in censuses, and not being permitted to vote in elections. This matter was resolved by referendum in May 1967 (Constitution Alteration [Aboriginal] Act, 1967), when 91 percent of Australian people voted to give the Commonwealth the right to make special laws for such people, and for them the right to be counted in the population and the right to vote (1967 *Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia* No. 53: 1293). Having conceded their rights, there was a need to define what was an 'Aboriginal person'. Under the legal definition of ensuing Commonwealth legislation, it means a person of the Aboriginal race of Australia (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission Act, 1989). The definition, by itself, does not answer the question posed by people administering Aboriginal affairs; how does one identify a person of the Aboriginal race of Australia? To Aboriginal communities that was not a problem. They knew they were Aborigines on the basis of their culture and ancestry. But, accepting that there was a need to refine the legal definition, Aborigines have come to accept an 'Aboriginal person' to be a person who identifies as being an Aborigine, and who is accepted as such by the community where he or she lives.

The overriding theme of being Aboriginal is the connection to the land. The 'land' not only includes specific sacred and heritage sites, but includes the total landscape to give a complete picture of the feeling of being Aboriginal. Aboriginality is the feeling of belonging to the land knowing that "your ancestors were Aboriginal and that they walked that land" (Steve Stanton, Tasmanian Land Council, personal communication). Aborigines in Tasmania are attempting to rediscover the thread which links them to their most ancient ancestral past. In the face of every type of cultural aggression, and in the face of all the decisive factors of the outside world, the most effective cultural weapon they can wield is the feeling of historical continuity. Land is central to Aboriginal identity and culture, and the need to maintain or regain that link has brought about the push for land rights by Aboriginal communities around Australia. In Tasmania, the Aborigines constantly wished to have their own land, and despaired when the government periodically reneged on its promises (see Chapters 5 and 6).

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE FROM 1840 TO 1860

The first estimate of how many sealers and their families lived in the Furneaux Group was made by Captain Stokes during his nautical surveys of the Bass Strait region. He

counted 25 children on Preservation and surrounding islands when he was in the Furneaux Group from March to April 1842 (Stokes 1846: 451). His figure is validated by Tindale's research (Tindale 1953: 19). Stokes also saw Aboriginal children on islands in western Bass Strait, but within a few years these families had left, making the Furneaux Group the only region in Tasmania with an expanding Aboriginal population. Crawford Pasco, a seaman on Stokes' survey saw two to five huts on Woody Island where the sealer John Anderson lived with his Aboriginal wife and their children (Pasco 1897: 142). Anderson was said to have taught his children to read and write and in recognition of his services, Stokes named Woody and Tin Kettle Islands the Anderson Isles. Anderson was the only sealer to have an island in Bass Strait named after him.

Further reports come from Broadfoot (1845: 188) who spent three days with sealers on Woody Island after being shipwrecked nearby. He counted 5 to 6 huts and 15 to 16 people on Woody Island in June 1844, in a little community at the south end of the island where Richard Maynard and James Everett lived. By 1845 John Anderson had moved with his family to the Western Straits (Plomley and Henley 1990: 71, 79, 89). In 1846 there were said to be "30 fine children of the sealing families in the islands" (UTA W7/1).

In September 1849 Robert Elwes, an Englishman on a world tour, counted six houses, six adults and four children on Gun Carriage Island (Elwes 1854: 253) (Plate 2). The four children were Thomas Beedon's, and included a daughter, Lucy, who was 21 years old at the time. As with Broadfoot, Elwes was shipwrecked, but near Logan Lagoon on the southeastern coast of Flinders Island. He spent several days on Gun Carriage Island before being taken by Jem Everard (Everett), one of the original sealers, to Swan Island to continue his travels. It seems that Elwes did not meet every person who resided on the island for the Surveyor-General, Robert Power, had issued tickets of occupation one year previously in December 1848 to six adult males.

From these accounts and Power's report of his visit in 1848 (AOT CSO 24/66), it seems that the total population during the 1840s and early 1850s was probably not more than 50 to 60 people, including children. The majority would have been sealers and their families who had been settled in the region for 20 to 30 years. Few non-Aboriginal settlers took up leases or squatted during these years, but in the next two decades they were to become the majority of the population.



Plate 2. Watercolour painting by Bishop Nixon of sealers' settlement on Gun Carriage Island in 1854 (Source: Allport Library, Hobart).

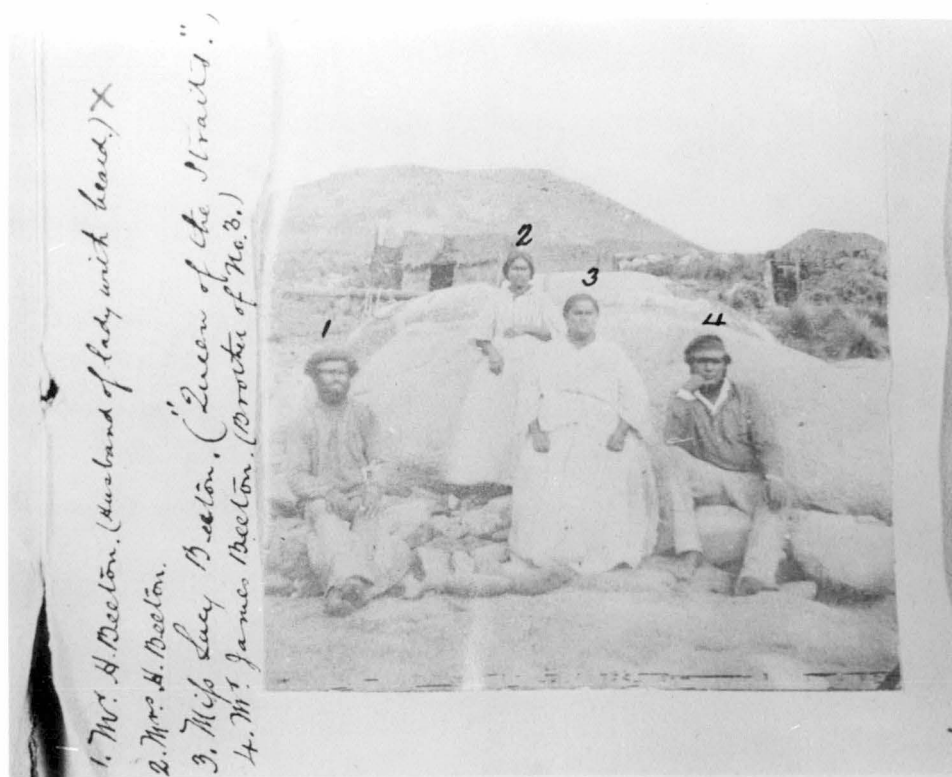


Plate 3. One of the first photographs of Aborigines in the Furneaux Group, taken by Rev. Fereday on Chappell Island in March 1862. From left: Harry Beeton, his wife Sarah Everett, his sister Lucy Beeton, and his brother James Beeton (Source: AOT).

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE FROM 1860 to 1870

The Visit of John Thomas, Surveyor, 1861

In 1861 the government sent John Thomas, a surveyor, to inspect the islands and survey them for their guano resources, and to mark off selections recently applied for in the chase for guano and possibly land speculation. Thomas spent several months in the Group. His survey maps and reports give the location of huts, peoples' names and the state of the muttonbird rookeries, and are the first to detail the islands in terms of their natural resources and human inhabitants (Dorset 4 maps and reports: Mapping Branch, Department of Environment and Planning, Hobart).

From his notes Thomas comes across as a hard worker with a low opinion of the Aborigines, possibly because they were reluctant to provide him information, and when they did it was often contradictory. To him they were "...evidently a much indolent, shiftless race of beings" (Dorset 4: Woody Island report). What the Aborigines thought of Thomas can only be surmised but he probably did not have the patience or tact required to understand their entirely different lifestyle and environment. His surveys frightened them because if guano was found on an island they occupied, outsiders could take up leases and the Aborigines could lose islands on which they had made homes and lived for many years. They regarded these islands, for which they paid little or no occupation fees, as their own. Guano had already been removed from Cat and Chappell Islands by Hobart merchants, an exercise that must have worried the muttonbirders going to Chappell Island. This was their principal island for catching the birds but was considered to have great potential for guano. The presence of Thomas going around and surveying islands on which they lived would thus have been sufficient reason not to befriend him. Their worst fears were realised within a few years. Outsiders took over the leases of islands and the Aborigines were forced onto Cape Barren Island as their last place of refuge (discussed below). This island was virtually unoccupied and considered 'barren' by early prospective land purchasers (Howard 1991: 85).

John Thomas found both Aborigines and non-Aborigines scattered over the islands. On Big Green Island there were considerable numbers of rabbits, as well as muttonbirds. It had a natural vegetation cover of barilla and all the sheep had recently been removed by Benvenuto Smith, whose father, Malcolm Laing Smith, had once leased the whole of Flinders Island. Big Chalky Island was leased by Charles Harley. East Kangaroo Island was unoccupied and from local knowledge it was stated to be inferior grazing, covered with barilla and lacking water. Goose Island had no wood but plenty of water and was

fine grazing land. The superintendent of the lighthouse, Mr Davis, ran 400 sheep and about 12 cattle.

Great Dog Island was rented by a Mr Harrison but was unoccupied and not stocked. There were two cottages, one with a garden attached. One was on the east side of the island and one on the south. Muttonbird sheds exist on each of these sites today. The island was excellent grazing, had an abundance of firewood and was a "splendid muttonbird rookery", though it lacked water. Little Dog Island was occupied by John Maynard, his wife and their four children. They had three head of cattle, two pigs and one goat. Thomas remarked that it would be good grazing if the island was burnt. It had an extensive muttonbird rookery. John was a son of one of the original sealers, Richard Maynard, who was then living on Long Island with his native Australian wife and their nine children. He had been resident for the last 8 of his 40 or so years in the Straits, and ran 200 sheep and 2 cattle. Long Island had no muttonbirds but Thomas thought it was suitable for grazing purposes. John Lee, his wife and their six children occupied Little Green Island on which they ran 3 cattle and 40 goats. It also had an extensive muttonbird rookery. Two years later Reibey found the Lees residing on Great Dog Island, possibly because sections of Little Green Island had been recently purchased.

Another populated island was Tin Kettle Island, occupied by John Smith, his wife and their 7 children for 12 years; Edward Mansell, another of the sealers, and his wife for 8 out of his 34 years in the Straits; his son Thomas Mansell, his wife and 2 children; Robert Rew, a widower, and his 2 children for 9 of his 30 years in the Straits (two years later Thomas Reibey found the Mansells living on Preservation Island, and married Rew, aged 63, to Anne Snailhouse, who was 65 years old, in John Smith's house); and an old man named Hopkins, supposedly aged about 100 years. The island lacked firewood but was suitable for grazing and agriculture. The sealers' huts were all grouped together near a boat harbour on the northwest side of the island. It is the site of a house to this day.

Woody Island was the other major place occupied. Once a large muttonbird rookery, Thomas remarked that the birds had been absent for ten years. Their extinction was said to be due to predation by pigs and damage by stock (TPP 1908. Number 57: 2). Another reason could have been the firing of scrub which was once quite extensive over most of the island (ML A606). The only occupant was the sealer James Everett, his wife and their two children. He ran 40 sheep and 5 cattle. Thomas thought that the south side of Woody Island could be cultivated but according to Everett the prevailing westerly winds were very destructive to crops. Thomas did not believe him but Everett was correct, and none of the islands were ever successfully cropped. Grazing was and

continues to be the principal method of obtaining a return because the islands are too small to provide shelter from the winds for crops — as James Everett knew.

Thomas also surveyed Babel, Cat, and Storehouse Islands, located off the central east coast of Flinders Island. Nobody lived on these islands and in spite of the large number of muttonbirds present on them they were not at that time exploited. Their remoteness was the chief reason for this.

The Visits of Archdeacon Thomas Reibey, 1862-1866

One year after Thomas's visit, Archdeacon Thomas Reibey paid the first of three visits to the Furneaux Group, in March 1862. Eight years previously in 1854, Bishop Nixon had spent some time with the sealers and their families, but Reibey's trip is important as the first of regular visitations by Church of England pastors over the next 40 years, as emissaries to the Aborigines to bring them under the fold of the Church. Reibey was the first Tasmanian born man to be ordained as a cleric, at a ceremony performed by Bishop Nixon in 1844, and was rector of Holy Trinity, Launceston and at Carrick (*Australian Dictionary of Biography* Volume 6: 17; *Examiner* 12 February 1912). On his first visit, Reibey was accompanied by the Reverend John Fereday of George Town. Fereday knew the sealers and their families well. As vicar at George Town, his diocese had included the Furneaux Group since 1846. Fereday took the first ever photographs of the Aborigines of the Furneaux Group, a series of group portraits on Chappell Island during the muttonbird season (Plate 3).

Thomas Reibey found the Islanders "an intelligent and interesting people — simple and primitive in their habits, free from the vices of a more civilised life, and very anxious about the instruction of their children" (TPP 1862. Number 17: 3). It is a truism that islands conduce to a different type of lifestyle (Murray-Smith 1986: 210) and at the time of Reibey's first visit the lifestyle of the population would have been similar to that of their parents. Reibey counted 66 children amongst the islands (TPP 1862. Number 17: 3). On his second visit in June 1863 he recorded 29 men, 28 women and 58 children living on 11 islands, all of them in Franklin Sound, including Cape Barren Island (TPP 1863. Number 48: 4, 5). Using the maximum number of children on the islands in the two years and other population data provided by Reibey, the total population in 1863 may be near 140 of which 76 (54 percent) may have been Aborigines. This two-fold increase in the total population since the 1840s was mainly due to the arrival of non-Aborigines, because the Aboriginal population had increased by perhaps only 20 people (30 percent).

Thomas Reibey paid his third and last visit in late March 1866. It coincided with the commencement of the muttonbird season, and there was no opportunity to make home visits. However he baptised eight to ten children born since his previous trip in 1863. This low number of children indicates a slow growth in the population of the Aborigines, which is to be expected, as it appears that there was no immigration into the Aboriginal community until later.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE FROM 1870 to 1890

Non-Aboriginal Immigration

On 7 February 1870 a census for all of Tasmania included the Furneaux Group as a separate entity for the first time (TPP 1871. Number 1: 3-4). The population consisted of 242 people (138 males, 104 females) of whom 108 were 20 years or older (Table 3). There was no breakdown of ethnic origin, but in 1872 Canon Marcus Brownrigg, on his first visitation to the Furneaux Group, estimated the population to be 227 of whom only 84 or 35 percent were Aboriginal, or 'half-castes' as they were then termed (Brownrigg 1872: iv). The number of Aborigines represented by this percentage approximates closely to that derived from genealogical data in Tindale (1953: 19). The Church of England religion was professed by 95 percent of the population, an important reason for the Church to continue to provide missionary services. Listed occupations were farmers (2), occupiers or tenants (1), farm labourers (6), and seafaring persons (4). Presumably the remaining men were either hunters, muttonbirders or occasional sealers, while women did home duties. The peoples' skills in hunting and sealing were extended to include even stranded whales. In 1877 1,000 gallons of whale oil were obtained from 90 "small blackfish", probably the pilot whale *Globicephala melaena*, which were stranded on Penguin (Forsyth) Island. Later, some eighteen casks of oil were brought up by Charles Harley in his ketch, the *Shamrock*, for sale in Launceston (*Examiner* 9 January 1877).

The increase in population since Reibey's visit in 1863 was mainly in non-Aborigines. Their numbers increased by some 94 people, compared to only about 8 in the Aboriginal population. The increase was due to the rush in the early 1860s to secure islands for their imagined guano deposits (TPP 1861. Number 38). Launceston merchants and new families immigrated, leased and purchased small islands, and selected on Cape Barren and Flinders Islands (the impact of these changes upon the resident Aborigines is described in detail in Chapter 5). Twenty families with an average of 4 children are sufficient to have boosted the population to 242 people.

Table 3. Population Statistics for the Furneaux Group from 1870 to 1991.

Year	Population		Total	Aborigines		Population 20+ years	
	Male	Female		Male	Female	Male	Female
1870	138	104	243	84		59	49
1881	137	115	252	—	—	—	—
1901	—	—	—	79	78	—	—
1911	366	250	616	—	—	215	111
1921	522	383	905	82	68	289	231
1933	567	436	1,003	139	112	328	224
1947	471	382	853	105	76	297	223
1954	574	453	1,027	—	—	347	243
1961	814	593	1,407	—	—	460	298
1966	703	531	1,234	—	—	417	285
1971	533	435	968	—	—	340	279
1976	509	448	957	—	—	342	288
1981	538	501	1,039	—	—	351	315
1986	521	489	1,010	45	49	355	335
1991	496	409	905	52	49	362	282

(Source: 1870-1901, TPP; 1911-1991, Australian Bureau of Statistics)

Some of the families that made new homes or who were already present on the islands from the 1850s to 1870s were Barrett (Waterhouse, then Great Dog and Long Islands); Baudinet (East Kangaroo and Flinders Island); Bates, Bishop and Kennedy (Vansittart Island); Davis (Big Green Island); Fenton (Little Green Island); Harley and Lee (Cape Barren Island); Holt (Little Dog Island); Laing Smith (Flinders Island); Morgan, Morris and Salier (Clarke Island); Robinson (Woody and Tin Kettle Islands); Stafford (Cape Barren then East Kangaroo Island); Taylor (Little Green and Great Dog Islands); Vickery (Puncheon Island), and Virieux (Chappell then Flinders Island). A further three families were based at the Goose Island lighthouse where at any time there were usually between 10 and 20 people because of a high and regular turnover of staff (AOT MB 2/20).

The Aborigines were still located on some of the smaller islands although the move to Cape Barren Island had commenced. Reverend Fereday spent a fortnight in February 1871 amongst the people, having been sent to visit them by Bishop Bromby (*Church News* 1 April 1871: 58-60). He found Edward Mansell and Richard Maynard, two of the original sealers, living on Passage and Long Islands respectively, while George Everett occupied Woody Island. On Cape Barren Island, at Munro Bay, were William Brown and a man called Lawton and, it seems, also several Aboriginal families at various other locations around the coast. This was Fereday's last visit to the Furneaux Group, as he was killed in April 1871 in a horse and cart accident near George Town (*Church News* 1 May 1871: 74; *Examiner* 20 April 1871). The demographic changes become clearer shortly thereafter, when a new clergyman commenced visiting the islands, one who detested muttonbirding.

The Visits of Canon Marcus Brownrigg, 1872-1885

Canon Marcus Brownrigg was educated in England and came out to Australia as a young man to study for the priesthood in Sydney (Murray-Smith 1979: xxi). He was appointed to St. John's in Launceston in 1868. An energetic person with wide interests, he travelled extensively in northern Tasmania, and the Furneaux Missions were an outreach he approached with enthusiasm. He made thirteen visits to the islands between 1872 and 1885, the majority of them in early January or early February. He had a great dislike of muttonbirding, finding the stench obnoxious; he thus made only one trip during the muttonbird season, timing his visits, though perhaps unintentionally, to meet the people in their own homes and not when they were muttonbirding.

Brownrigg's visits occurred in a period of continuous upheaval in the Aboriginal community. Immigrant non-Aboriginals who obtained the leases or freehold on islands caused the original occupiers to move elsewhere (discussed in Chapter 5). The only place to move to was Cape Barren Island. Aboriginal families already settled on Cape Barren Island included James Everett who formerly resided at Long Beach, George Everett and John Smith at Thunder and Lightning Bay, John Maynard at The Corner and William Brown at Munro Bay (Murray-Smith 1979: 81-83). Occupation was not permanent, for within three years both William Brown and John Smith had moved to Long Beach (Murray-Smith 1979: 121; AOT CSD 10/6/89[3]). Non-aboriginal families on Cape Barren Island included the Lee's at Apple Orchard and Harley's at Puncheon Point. It seems very likely that not all inhabitants of Cape Barren Island were mentioned in Brownrigg's accounts as different names and locations constantly occur, making it difficult to know just who was living on the island and where.

During Brownrigg's visits, Long Beach was the main settlement. He called it "Franklin Village" (AOT CSD 10/6/89[5]). The Aborigines, partly because of their tendency to move around frequently and not wishing to build substantial structures, lived in homes that could be more correctly termed huts. These peregrinations annoyed even Fereday who consistently found them absent, although he did visit at the beginning of the muttonbird season. According to him "they are always on the move" (*Church News* 1 April 1871: 59). Their buildings were thus cheap, quick to erect and most of the materials could be gathered locally. For example, the hut of Thomas Mansell who lived at Long Beach near John Smith and Alexander Maynard consisted of two small bedrooms and a living room with a fireplace (AOT CSD 10/6/89[6]). It was built of palings, the roof was thatched with grass and the chimney was constructed of rocks and wood. Other homes were like George Everett's, who had "a very neat homestead with a prettily laid out garden, well stocked with flowers, reflecting great credit upon the owners" (Murray-Smith 1979: 122). His house was probably of similar construction to Thomas Mansell's, as were other homes in the Furneaux Group at that period, such as, for example, "The Queen of the Isles" Lucy Beedon's cottage on Badger Island, Charles Harley's on East Kangaroo Island and Jules Virieux's on Flinders Island (*Examiner* 31 March, 28 May, 4 June 1883).

By the late 1870s the move to Cape Barren Island from the smaller islands by the Aborigines had been completed. The community possessed specialised skills in boat-building which Brownrigg would have appreciated being an amateur boat-builder himself. Cape Barren Island was the centre for the Furneaux Group with the services of a government schoolteacher and policeman provided, mainly as a result of the insistence of Reibey and Brownrigg. The government at that time accepted that the Aborigines had certain special needs but it did not cut them off from the wider society as completely as it was to do later. A strong group leadership from Lucy Beedon and George Everett still held the community together. In 1881 the government withheld from sale the western portion of Cape Barren Island, covering 6,000 acres (2,428 ha), so that it could be reserved for the Aboriginal Community (*Hobart Gazette* 15 February 1881: 246) (the political, legislative and administrative ramifications of this reserve are discussed in Chapters 5 and 6).

Marcus Brownrigg last visited in February 1885. He retired in 1887 due to ill-health, and died in Sydney on 29 July 1890 after a long illness at the relatively young age of 55 years (*Church News* 1 September 1890: 331). Handicapped by being able to visit only once a year and by lack of money, he attempted to help the Aborigines in the way he thought best. During these missionary visitations the population of the Furneaux Group

had grown slowly but steadily. In April 1881 there were 252 people in the Furneaux Group, consisting of 137 males and 115 females (Statistics of Tasmania, 1881: 664), including 11 people on Goose Island. Elsewhere there were 13 in the Kent Group; 42 on King Island, the majority of whom were lighthouse keepers and their families; 8 on Trefoil Island; 8 on Robbins Island; 3 on Waterhouse Island and 5 on West Hunter (now called Hunter) Island.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE FROM 1890 to 1900

There are no population statistics for the Furneaux Group in the 1891 census, but according to Bishop Montgomery there were then about 110 people living on Cape Barren Island including about 60 children (Montgomery 1892: 229). There may have been more because one year later, in 1892, 81 adults signed a petition of which 70 were Aborigines (*Church News* 1 March 1892: 614). The majority of the signatories would have been living on Cape Barren Island. Again, total population figures are absent from the 1901 census, but assuming that the Aboriginal population constituted approximately 40 percent of the total, then the total population may have ranged between 275 and 400 people. The population included 157 Aborigines (TPP 1901. Number 38: 249). The total number is in keeping with the figure gathered by the Victorian Field Naturalists' Club who visited in December 1893, eight years previously. They estimated there to be about 250 people on the islands in the proportion of half Aborigines to half non-Aborigines (*Australasian* 30 December 1893)

The two-fold increase in the population since April 1881 was mainly due to the influx of new settlers to Flinders Island which was opened for selection following the survey of John W. Brown in 1887 (TPP 1887. Number 62: 3-5). Brown gave a favourable report on the island, obtaining some of his information from long-standing hunters. The land was of good quality, but its relative isolation from the Tasmanian mainland required the "right class of colonists" to be induced to settle on Flinders Island (TPP 1887. Number 62: 5). By the 'right class', Brown meant people from the United Kingdom, not local Tasmanians or mainlanders. His advice was not heeded as the majority of initial selections were taken up by Aborigines or non-Aborigines already with holdings in the Furneaux Group.

The Visits of Bishop Montgomery, 1891-1901

After the opening up of Flinders Island for settlement, Bishop Montgomery began visiting the Furneaux Group annually between 1891 and 1901. Montgomery was

appointed to the See of Tasmania from England and arrived in Hobart on 23 October 1889. He made his first episcopal visitation to the Furneaux Group in March 1891, arriving direct from the West Coast (*Church News* 1 April 1891: 444). There could be no greater contrast: the West Coast, usually cold, wet and muddy and then a hive of mining activity, set against the slow pace of life in the Furneaux Group, which Montgomery described as "always afternoon". The atmosphere permeated through to the Bishop. Everything was good; land was cheap, wildlife abounded and the islands were inhabited by people "whom to know is to love". He had a high opinion of the Cape Barren Island community and vowed that he would always do all he could for their best welfare (*Church News* 1 September 1891: 517).

The people lived simply. The Aborigines pursued a lifestyle based on elements from both Aboriginal and nineteenth century European society (Ryan 1981: 224). This seemingly casual lifestyle annoyed many people whose attitude to the Aborigines may be summed up by a casual visitor to the islands in 1883 who wrote a series of thirteen articles about them under the nom de plume 'H. S' (*Examiner* 30 March-4 June 1883). He stated that the "...half-castes need boozing up to make them do anything. Their motto is Dolce fa Niente--sweet do nothing" (*Examiner* 26 May 1883). However the most impartial description of their lifestyle in Montgomery's period comes from A. J. Campbell, a well-known ornithologist from Victoria who organised the Victorian Field Naturalists' Club expedition to the Furneaux Group in 1893. Campbell described the Aborigines as quiet, modest people:

The homes of the natives are somewhat primitive, but are, nevertheless, clean and tidy; the inside walls being lined with newspapers (illustrated if possible) and the shelves adorned with polished earthenware jars and shining tins...They are exceedingly modest and retiring in their disposition — very retiring, for once I chanced to see some women washing clothes by a streamlet — a good subject, I thought, for a picture — when almost before I could adjust my camera they deserted their tubs and crashed into the scrub, like a mob of wild cattle. We visited many of the dwellings and found the inmates spoke perfect English, and in manners were quite at ease (*Australasian* 30 December 1893).

Montgomery's first trip coincided with the beginning of the muttonbird season, and he found that all the "little wooden homes scattered through the bush" were deserted as the Aborigines were on Chappell Island. Only Edward Stephens, the schoolteacher, who battled the feeling of isolation by boat building, carpentry and gardening — and his

family remained. Montgomery was isolated himself on the island for about a week, due to foul weather, before the inter island steamer *Linda* turned up. In this week he turned to reading books and bushwalking, but being an energetic man he hated wasting time, especially waiting for boats which he found "a great trial" (*Church News* 1 October 1891: 531).

Montgomery had great affection for the islands and particularly for the wildlife. He could see that the muttonbird industry needed protection from over-exploitation and in 1891, responding to his representations on the matter, the government set, for the first time ever, regulations to govern the season (*Hobart Gazette* 15 December 1891: 2449). The Aborigines also required protection from certain "well known temptations" (alcohol of course), through education and spiritual renewal. The best way to do this, Montgomery argued, was to centralise them on Cape Barren Island where they could be taught by Edward Stephens (*Church News* 1 December 1891: 562-563). To voyage around the islands teaching and catechising, as Stephens had attempted, was impossible in his view (*Weekly Courier* 31 December 1904: 35).

Although Montgomery visited Cape Barren Island each year, after his second visit he spent more time on other islands and especially on Flinders Island, visiting settlers who in the main were non-Aboriginals. In 1894 he set up churches at Double Corner near Trousers Point and at Badger Corner in Franklin Sound. He frequently visited Emita and Settlement Point where Henry Collis, an earlier schoolteacher on Cape Barren Island, lived until his death in 1896. There were about seventeen households on Flinders Island in 1899 (*Church News* 3 October 1899: 1123), most of whom were involved in muttonbirding.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE FROM 1900 to 1920

Three years prior to the 1911 census the Police Commissioner for Tasmania, Mr J. E. C. Lord, reported to Parliament his impressions of conditions in the Furneaux Group, and particularly the 'problem' of the Aborigines (TPP 1908. Number 57: 1). The reasons for Lord's visit were firstly, the disquiet evinced by the Aborigines of Cape Barren Island concerning the management of the Reserve provided for their behalf in 1881 (see Chapter 5). Secondly, it was to enquire into local government administration on Flinders Island. Lord described his task "to be extensive and of a complex character...altogether too large a subject with which to attempt to deal in detail in a report of this nature" (TPP 1908. Number 57: 1, 8). However he attempted to be objective in his findings, to treat all inhabitants equally regardless of their origin so that everyone would receive like

consideration. In this he seems to have been successful. However the resulting legislation, the Cape Barren Island Reserve Act, 1912 did not resolve the problems as it was over-restrictive. There was no scope given for self-determination by Aborigines. (The 1912 Act, and other Acts are discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.)

Lord estimated the total Aborigine population on both Flinders and Cape Barren Islands to be under 250 but increasing. The Aborigines would have made up about 40 percent of the population, a percentage that had shown little deviation since the 1860s. The majority lived on the Reserve on Cape Barren Island in some 26 houses most of which contained only 2 rooms and an average of 7 people per dwelling (TPP 1908. Number 57: 9). Very few homes had gardens, with poverty, dirt and thriftlessness all apparent. These apparently unsanitary conditions contrast strongly with later impressions of people who were brought up on the island. They frequently commented on the cleanliness of the dwellings and how "one could eat from the floor":

...they were old built homes but they were clean, very clean, you could eat your food off the floor. The old people like in my parents' day, were very clean people, very, very clean people. They'd have a dish to wash in and a dish to cook in (Ruth Maynard interview).

The main occupations of Aborigines living on Cape Barren Island early in the twentieth century continued to be labouring and hunting, including muttonbirding (Appendix 1). In 1909 42 percent of that island's workforce were hunters. In contrast, on Flinders Island there were just six men who listed their occupation as hunters. Others are known to have supplemented their income from hunting but for the purpose of electoral rolls did not call themselves hunters (Figure 7).

The census of 1911 recorded 616 people resident in the Furneaux Group, 193 of them on Cape Barren Island. The make-up of the population was 366 males and 250 females with almost double the number of males aged 20+ years compared to females (215:111) (TPP 1911. Number 28: 91). The large proportion of males in the population was undoubtedly due to the continuing land boom on Flinders Island which was still bringing in new settlers. According to the census, hunting, which included the capture of muttonbirds, was the main occupation of 81 men. Other occupations for men were tin mining, farming, labouring and domestic duties for women. In these early censuses, women had no other occupation, until new jobs were created on the Reserve in the 1940s through social welfare money.

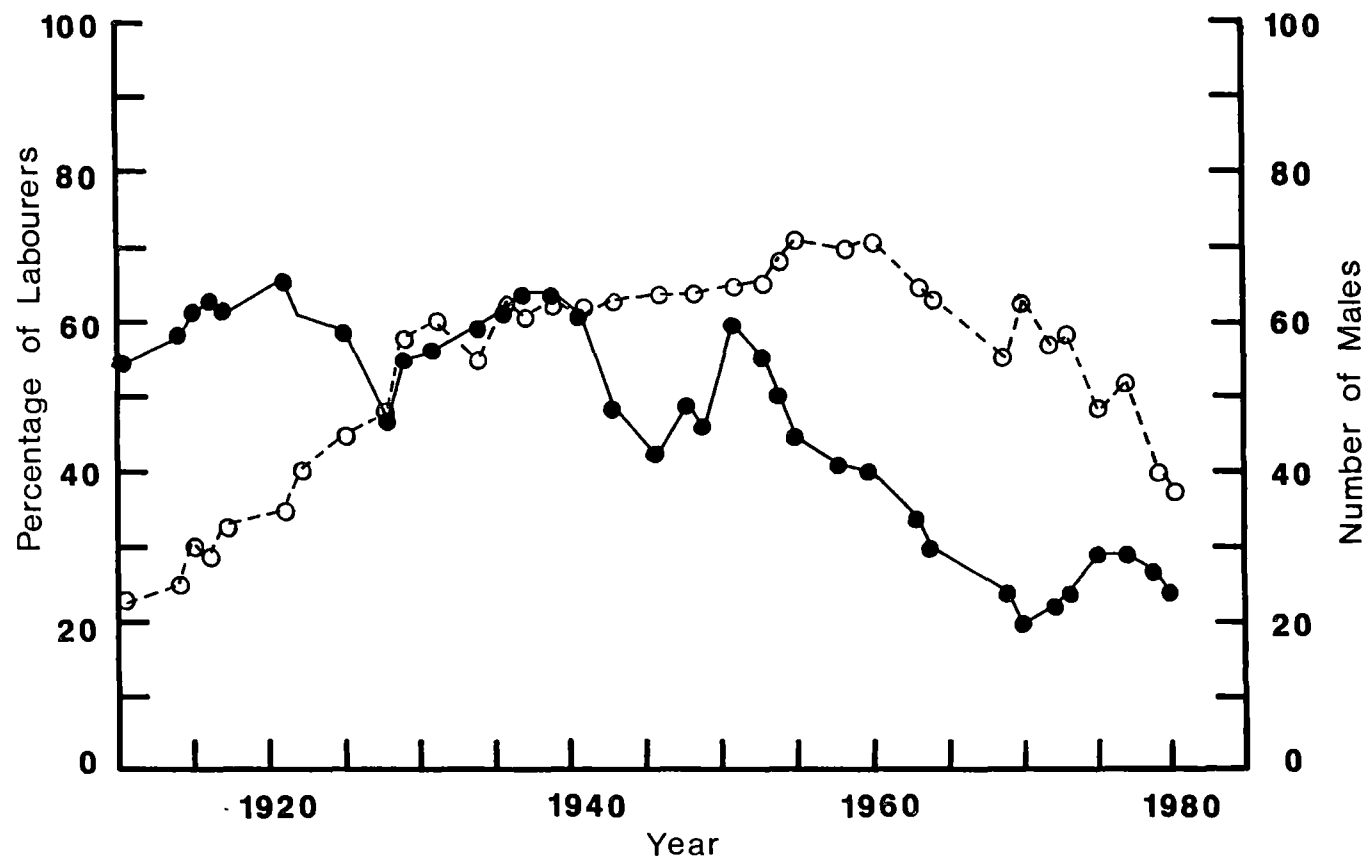


Figure 7. Variation in number of males (—) 20 years and over, on Cape Barren Island, and percentage of these whose occupation was listed as labourer (---) (Source: Commonwealth Electoral Rolls).

On 28 February 1915 Captain Phillip Thomas, the last surviving Aborigine whose parents were a tribal Aboriginal mother and a white sealer, died on Cape Barren Island at the age of 83. Many attended his funeral which was held in the church built under Bishop Montgomery's charge (Plate 4). Thomas died at a time when the islands were experiencing steady growth.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE FROM 1920 to Present

In 1921 the census showed that 905 people (522 males: 383 females) lived in the Furneaux Group. Of these, 144 (82 males, 62 females) were Aborigines. One hundred and forty people were engaged in trapping. Significantly, 6 males were unemployed while another 178 had no fixed wage but did not term themselves as 'unemployed'. This indicates that despite their short season, the inhabitants saw muttonbirding and hunting of fur-bearing mammals as real, year-long employment.

In the 1930s occupations changed as people looked for more regular and reliable work. Boat-building had almost disappeared, and men found work in carpentry, mining, and farming, while women were employed in domestic or home duties. Sometimes the whole family joined in to gather grass trees *Xanthorrhoea australis*, for resin to produce varnish, an occupation that had a chequered life until its demise in the 1950s. These roles were temporarily suspended during the muttonbird season, when everyone including children joined in the harvest. Through the 1930s and during the Great Depression, most people depended on government welfare of dole and sustenance relief for year round support, so muttonbirding gave them a sense of respect and independence plus extra cash to buy items which otherwise were out of reach. A typical example of taking what work was around is that of Roy Goss, an old-timer of the bush on Flinders Island:

Well the muttonbird only start for five weeks. Then I used to work for the Council and wherever I could get anything. Then in the winter time you would be chasing kangaroos. And then I bought 15 acres of ground run the horse on. We used to gallop the kangaroos down with the dogs on horseback (Roy Goss interview).

Great technological changes occurred within this period. The first aeroplane to visit Cape Barren Island flew over The Corner, Mt Munro and Apple Orchard on 26 September 1920 (CBI School Visitors Journal, 26 September 1920). The first car appeared in the 1930s, owned by Harry Lovett, who was employed as an overseer by the Flinders Island

Council. A radio telephone link was established with the outside world in 1937 (TPP 1937. Number 18: 2), but resulted in bureaucratic procedures. The medical doctor who once made regular visits to the Reserve, now insisted on the Aborigines obtaining a request in writing from the nurse before he would answer their radio call.

Up to the commencement of the Second World War the majority of Aborigines lived on Cape Barren Island, with some on Flinders Island. In 1933 there were 251 Aborigines, and in 1940, 282, of which 178 lived on Cape Barren Island and 104 elsewhere in Tasmania. The only enclaves in mainland Tasmania were said to be five families at Nicholls Rivulet near Cygnet where the descendants of Fanny Cochrane Smith resided, and one family at Latrobe in northwest Tasmania (AOT LSD 51[13]). This is probably an under-estimate as there were other Aboriginal families in southern Tasmania apart from Smith's (Friend 1992: 127). The ones in Launceston were Aborigines from Cape Barren Island seeking work before returning. In February 1944 the number of Aborigines on Cape Barren Island was only 106 (AOT LSD 51[14]). The large fall can be put down to families seeking work away from the island and not returning, and the Second World War, with the government placing able bodied males in work in mainland Tasmania. By 1947 the number in the Furneaux Group was 181, most of them living on Flinders Island.

The census returns for 1954, 1961 and 1966 do not provide figures on the number of Aborigines in Tasmania. In 1971 there were 575, in 1976 2,522, in 1981 2,688, in 1986 6,716, and in 1991 8,948 (Australian Bureau of Statistics Census Returns). The large discrepancy in numbers may be due to more people declaring themselves to be Aboriginal and, secondly, to the framing of the census questions (Michael Strong, Commonwealth Department of Social Security, personal communication). As a proportion of the total population in Tasmania the number of Aborigines has increased from 0.5 percent in 1971 to 2.0 percent in 1991.

In the Furneaux Group the number of Aborigines has steadily increased since 1976, the first year for which figures are available in recent times. In that year there were 60 people in a total population in the Group of 957 (6.3 percent); 94 in 1981 out of 1,010 (9.3 percent), 103 in 1986 out of 1039 (9.9 percent), and 101 in 1991 out of 905 (11.2 percent). This steady increase occurred entirely on Flinders Island as the number of people on Cape Barren Island has decreased annually to between 40 to 60 now. The variation is due to relatives and friends visiting or temporarily residing for short periods before returning home.



Plate 4. Funeral of Phillip Thomas on Cape Barren Island in 1915. Born in 1831, Thomas was the last of the first generation Aborigines when he died (Source: Mabel Brown).

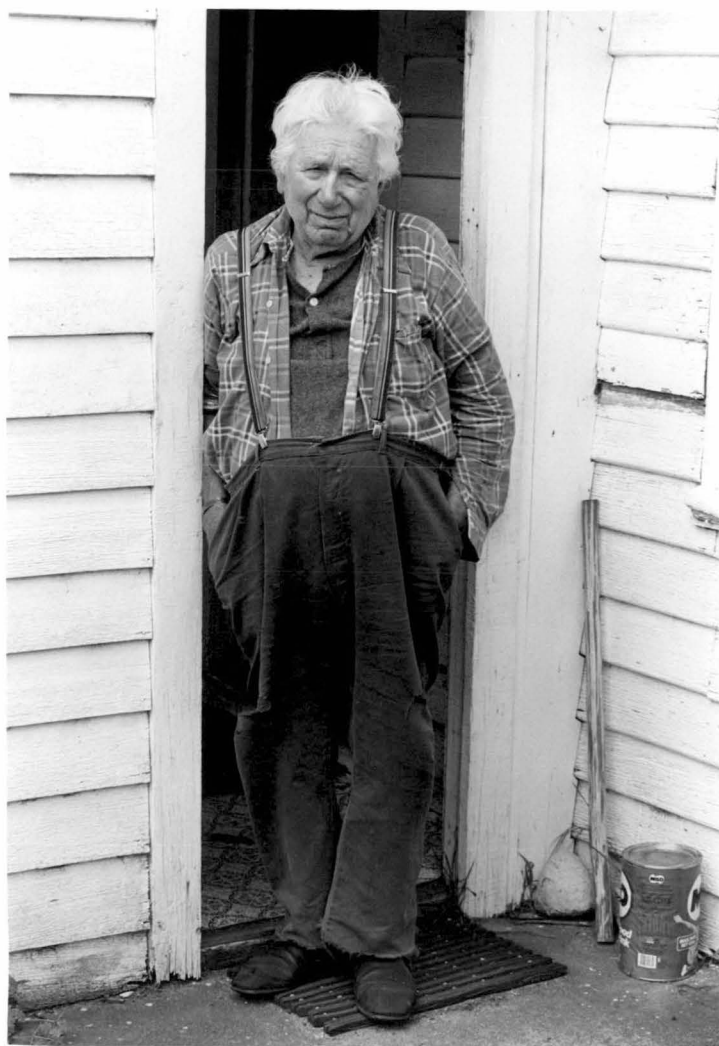


Plate 5. Darcy Maynard, born in 1903, the oldest Aborigine on Cape Barren Island in 1993 (Source: I. Skira).

In 1986 the distribution of Aborigines around Tasmania was concentrated in the south of the State. Over 3,000 lived in the greater Hobart-southern region including several hundred each in the country districts of the Huon, Port Cygnet and Esperance. The country settlements included people leaving Cape Barren Island in the 1940s to seek work in fruit picking. Perhaps surprisingly, there were 2,215 Aborigines in northwest Tasmania concentrated in the Burnie to Devonport region, compared to 1,442 in greater Launceston. Their distance from the muttonbird islands has not prevented them from muttonbirding, with those living on mainland Tasmania usually going to Trefoil Island, while the Furneaux Group is worked by local Aborigines from Flinders and Cape Barren Islands. The muttonbirders who go to Trefoil Island are evenly divided between Launceston and northwest Tasmania, although the Trefoil Island Aboriginal Corporation which ran muttonbird operations on Trefoil Island until recently, was based in Launceston.

SUMMARY

The term Aborigine is a modern classification for any person who is descended from the small pool of white sealers — tribal-born Aboriginal women liaisons. Present Aborigines have come to accept an 'Aboriginal' person as one who identifies as being an Aborigine, and who is accepted as such by the community where he or she lives. The overriding theme of being Aboriginal is the connection to the land.

During the nineteenth and the early decades of the twentieth centuries, the population growth of the Aborigines was slow. They constantly lived in poverty and their mainstay was muttonbirding. Other employment came from hunting fur-bearing mammals, occasional sealing expeditions, making shell necklaces, farming and building boats. The exotic industry of gathering and crushing the stem of the grass tree for varnish was another means of income. Occasionally whale strandings were utilised.

To about 1911 Aborigines constituted approximately 40 percent of the total population of the Furneaux Group. Labouring and hunting, including muttonbirding were still the mainstays of their economy on Cape Barren Island. By the 1930s occupations changed as people looked for more regular and reliable work. The Aboriginal population in 1933 numbered 251 and up to the commencement of the Second World War the majority lived on Cape Barren Island, with some on Flinders Island. The only enclaves in mainland Tasmania were said to be five families in southern Tasmania and one family in northwest Tasmania. By 1947 the number of Aborigines in the Furneaux Group was 1811, most of them now residing on Flinders Island as families left Cape Barren Island seeking

work. Some made their way to Tasmanian cities, and in the 1971 census there were 575 Aborigines in Tasmania. In 1991 the number was 8,948. Their distance from the muttonbird rookeries has not prevented them from participating in muttonbirding.

CHAPTER 5

ALIENATION OF LAND

"It might be presumed that the native inhabitants of any land have an incontrovertible right to their own soil: a plain and sacred right, however which seems not to have been understood. Europeans have entered their boundaries uninvited, and when there, have not only acted as if they were undoubted lords of the soil, but have punished the natives as aggressors if they have evinced a disposition to live in their own country" (Report from the Select Committee on Aborigines [British Settlements] British Parliamentary Papers 1837 [425] Volume 7, in *Anthropology Aborigines* 2, 1968; Irish University Press, Shannon).

The Aboriginal Settlement at Flinders Island closed in 1847. More than 100 Aborigines had died there, leaving very few remaining. The absence of a strong personality once George Augustus Robinson left, and its isolation and expense in maintaining the facility were other factors contributing to its closure. The remaining Aborigines, numbering some sixteen or so along with their caretakers, were moved to Oyster Cove in southern Tasmania. This left the sealers and their families the sole residents in the Furneaux Group. Very few people resided on the islands in the northwest of the state. The Van Diemen's Land Company owned Trefoil, Robbins and Walker Islands. Three Hummock and Hunter Islands could not be farmed without first clearing large tracts of land and fencing in stock. King Island was too large, remote and scrubby to develop without resources, particularly financial ones. Some of the small muttonbird islands in the region were relatively inaccessible with no wood or water, difficult landings and no boat harbours for safe anchorages.

The oldest first generation of Aborigines were at this time in their mid-twenties to early thirties and some, such as Lucy Beedon and George Everett were to become respected leaders of their community. In the 1850s however, the original sealers still were the

leaders. Technological innovations were to become part of their latter years. Specifically, the invention of the electric telegraph and steam engine were to have an enormous impact, by dramatically speeding up communications. The establishment of local newspapers such as the Launceston *Examiner* in 1842 and the Hobart *Mercury* in 1845 also aided communications and spread knowledge. These communication tools were, however, not only to aid the Aborigines, but also others with an interest in the Bass Strait islands. Later on another product, corrugated iron, first widely used in Australia in the 1850s (Dr Miles Lewis, Architecture Department, University of Melbourne, personal communication), was to provide the main structural basis of the muttonbird sheds.

Despite these technological aids the sealers and their families remained insulated from the mainstream of life for many more years because of their extreme isolation, remarkable even for the nineteenth century, on relatively remote islands. Their lack of experience with bureaucrats and officials saw them pushed off islands they once occupied, to Cape Barren Island. Their black Aboriginal, and not their white European ancestry was to become their hallmark of distinctiveness to outsiders. Being Aboriginal, their life was going to be that much harder than if they had been born white and poor. The rapid immigration to the islands, occurring even as early as 1872 when there were approximately 140 non-Aborigines resident in the islands compared to 80 Aborigines (Brownrigg 1872: iv) established the Aborigines as a minority group.

TENURE FROM 1848 to 1860

The Visits of Surveyor-General Power

In 1848 Colonial Secretary Bicheno sent Surveyor-General Power to investigate the state of affairs on the islands. The main purpose of the visit was to gain some control over the inhabitants by extracting rent to the value of their holdings (AOT LSD 1/51/355). As the officials in Hobart did not know what to expect, Bicheno's instructions to Power were not made specific. Instead he was enjoined to use his own judgement in each case, as the government knew that most of the occupiers were sealers and "the like class of people" (AOT LSD 1/51/359). A type of user-pay principle operated even then as rent was to be charged "so as to secure the Government from loss, and to affect a kind of registration and only demand what is likely to be obtained" (AOT LSD 1/51/359).

Power issued tickets of occupation for one year at the rate of 1/- per year to the following: on Clarke Island, John Thomas and Thomas Dobson; Woody Island, Richard

Maynard, James Everett, William Flynn and John Mayree; Gun Carriage Island, Thomas Beedon, John Riddell, Edward Mansell, David Kelly, Thomas Tucker and Richard Pollard; Cape Barren Island, William Jermyn and John Ley; Tin Kettle Island, John Smith and James William (AOT LSD 1/51/361). With respect to the other islands, the lease of the whole of Flinders Island renewable annually (*Hobart Town Gazette* 7 December 1847: 1197, 4 January 1848: 11-12, 17 April 1849: 216) was let to Malcolm Laing Smith from 1850 for ten years at £30 per year (AOT LSD 1/4/49). Smith had once been a Commandant at Wybalenna and had previously lived on King Island for several years (Stokes 1846: 265), so he was accustomed to rough living. Included in his lease were a bullock dray, water cart, and yokes from the Aboriginal settlement, and other items deemed essential for anyone wishing to rent the islands (AOT LSD 1/4/111). Additional chattels were 18 sheep on Isabella Island and about 150 cattle, mostly running wild, on Flinders Island. He was also given the privilege of pasturing stock on Prime Seal and Big Green Islands, and several other smaller islands lying between them and Settlement Point (*Hobart Town Gazette* 4 January 1848).

It was also during Power's visit that Thomas Beedon applied to lease Badger Island (AOT LSD 1/51/414; CSO 25/2/3021). His application was refused on the ground that the lighthouse staff on nearby Goose Island required access to firewood which was only available from Badger Island (AOT LSD 1/51/442). This application by Beedon together with Power's report upon his trip led the government to consider reservation of the islands (AOT LSD 1/51/442). Nothing happened until more than ten years later, when competition between guano speculators led to demands to lease nearly all Tasmania's offshore islands (AOT LSD 2/3/852, 888, 890, 891; TPP 1861. Number 38). Previously, the government had no policy on the letting or purchasing of islands; perhaps not unlike present day administrations, it operated through crisis management.

Power revisited the islands in September to October 1854 accompanied by the Anglican Bishop of Tasmania, Francis Nixon (incumbent in the position since November 1842). The two men took advantage of the government's 90-ton schooner the *Beacon*, on its resupply voyage to the Goose and Deal Islands lighthouses. It seems that there was no particular reason for the visit. The attractions of the islands and their peculiar inhabitants, coupled with it being Nixon's second visit after a time lapse of nearly eleven years (Nixon 1857: 17) and a chance for him to do some landscape painting (at which he was very good; Plate 2), were sufficient to justify the trip. The strong physical and spiritual attractions of the Bass Strait islands and the slower pace of life on them compared to the rest of Tasmania were to induce a range of visitors, from clergymen to naturalists, for more than 50 years after Power and Nixon's sojourn.

The visitors stopped at Settlement Point after first visiting the Deal Island Lighthouse. There they found Benvenuto Smith cultivating 30 acres of wheat and 10 acres of turnips and potatoes, with a further 1,200 acres in pasture. He had about 500 sheep and 150 cattle (AOT LSD 1/51/365). The former Aboriginal settlement was in ruins. Only the church was standing and it was being used as a barn (Nixon 1857: 118). This was still its use in the mid-twentieth century. The tenants were experiencing some of the problems that had been evident in the mid-1820s. Runaway convicts were moving about, stealing and creating fear amongst the local inhabitants (*Examiner* 16 April 1857).

Nixon and Power then made their way into Franklin Sound picking up an old seaman, Parish, as their pilot at Settlement Point. Parish had been a resident in these parts for many years and once was a guide for George Augustus Robinson. He dwelt anywhere, but mainly on Tin Kettle Island (Nixon 1857: 51). On Gun Carriage Island many of the Islanders were away muttonbirding and getting feathers on nearby Great Dog Island which Power said was their principal rookery (AOT LSD 1/51/371). However Thomas Tucker and his wife were present and offered their hospitality to Power and Nixon by giving them part of their cottage to use. For this the latter were very grateful, despite having to sleep on mattresses stuffed with muttonbird feathers. According to Nixon "the smell of mutton-bird feathers, and the incessant invasion of the fleas", together with the howling wind, gave him very little sleep (Nixon 1857: 43). Next day many of the people returned from muttonbirding to greet their visitors, and at the Sunday service the congregation numbered 28 people, the majority of whom were sealers and their families (Nixon 1857: 45).

From Gun Carriage Island Power and Nixon sailed to Preservation and Clarke Islands. On Preservation Island they found two brothers, one of whom was Dr Allen, a former medical officer to the Aboriginal Settlement. Dr Allen lived on Clarke Island with his wife and their eight children. He had been on the island for eight years "living a secluded and semi-savage life...becoming as rough and wild as the uncultivated scenes around him" (Nixon 1857: 52). Power served notices to quit upon both Allen brothers because of default in rent payments (Nixon 1857: 50). The rent for Clarke Island in 1848 was 5/- per year (AOT TRE 21/1/83) and it was probably similar in 1854. They were finally evicted in 1860 for non-payment of the rent (AOT LSD 2/2/838). However, they did not move from the Furneaux Group, for ten years later the family was still present, renting and then attempting to purchase Preservation Island (AOT TRE 21/2/220, 302).

With the Allens was a son of George Augustus Robinson, a brother-in-law to Dr Allen. This may have been G. A. Robinson Jr. who obtained the leases of Woody and Tin Kettle Islands for fourteen years from 1 November 1860 to 31 October 1874 for £3 and £4 per annum respectively (AOT LSD 209/2/224). Robinson was forced to leave Clarke Island by the new lessee, H. D. MacLaine, about March 1863 (AOT LSD 2/2/926). However he kept the other two islands in the name of Henry Robinson, and in 1872 was recorded as leasing Tin Kettle, Woody and other islands (AOT TRE 21/2/206). By 1877 the annual rent for them was £50 and £52/10/- respectively (AOT TRE 21/2/335).

The reluctance to quit occupation upon official notice was a trait of many inhabitants of the islands. In most cases they had nowhere else to go, except to another island, and this is what they usually did. The government had no means to enforce its notices. Official visits were infrequent and it would have been too expensive to station a crown bailiff or police officer with a boat and crew in the region.

The only semblance of bureaucracy came via the special constables appointed amongst the inhabitants on their own request. The appointments seemed to be usually for the benefit of the appointee, not the government. James Munro, living on Preservation Island, appears to have been the first person known to be appointed as special constable for the Bass Strait islands in 1831, although there was confusion in official circles whether he actually was appointed (AOT CSO 1/131/3165; 1/576/185/13061). The reason he gave for his request was that he could not control immigrants and runaways for his own protection unless he had the authority to evict them. Similar reasons were used by the Colonial Secretary in the appointment in 1836 of Malcolm Laing Smith as magistrate at Circular Head, an ambit that took in King Island (AOT LSD 1/70/67; *Hobart Town Gazette* 8 January 1835: 26); of David Howie as special constable to King and the other northwest islands in 1846 (AOT LSD 1/52/252; *Hobart Town Gazette* 1 September 1846: 992); and of David Kelly, formerly of Gun Carriage Island, and living on Long Island when he was appointed special constable in 1857 (AOT LSD 1/51/532).

Power and Nixon were suitably impressed by their visit. According to Power:

Every encouragement may be given to these Islanders who are Pilots to people in distress or in case of shipwreck, men to be depended upon and as members of their small community impeachable in manners and conduct (AOT LSD 1/51/378).

But were Power's dealings with the Islanders sufficient to enable the formation of an informed opinion? He was an outsider who flitted in just twice, and as quickly left. There is no evidence that he made any real effort to come to grips with the concerns of the Islanders.

Bicheno seems to have recognised that they were a special class of people because of their Aboriginal link, but he nevertheless seems to have opposed the granting of special privileges to them. On receiving Power's report, Colonial Secretary Bicheno wrote back on 11 July 1850 summing up the government's attitude as "...with a view to preventing the growth of any rights which might interfere with the future resumption of certain islands in Bass's Strait by the crown" (AOT LSD 1/51/355). An earlier statement by the British Parliament that native inhabitants are presumed to have a right to their land irrespective of European intrusion (*British Parliamentary Papers*, 1837 [425] Volume 7) conflicted with Bicheno's view. His policy was to give the Islanders no special consideration. The Islanders' expectations were certainly different, but the government showed little real interest in their social and economic welfare.

TENURE FROM 1860 to 1870

A Decade of Loss

A major upheaval in the lives of the Islanders occurred in 1860 when there was a host of applications (particularly from W. L. Crowther of Hobart) to buy or lease islands in order to exploit their presumed guano resources (AOT LSD 1/69/326, 327; 2/3/852, 888, 889, 890, 891). On advice from Surveyor-General James Calder, the government suspended from sale as of 24 December 1860 all Tasmanian islands (except Bruny Island in the south) to safeguard what was thought to be a lucrative resource (*Hobart Town Gazette* 8 January 1861: 26; AOT LSD 1/50/430; 1/69/270-299). However, it permitted applications for occupation to still be received and considered as circumstances allowed. Since 1850 Tasmania had lost one third of its male population to the Victorian gold rushes on the Australian mainland (Robson 1983: 467), and was desperate for incentives to hold people.

Two of the major players in the guano game were J. Askunas and William Lodewyk Crowther, of whom Crowther was much better known. Trained as a surgeon, Crowther had wide commercial interests in timber and guano (*Australian Dictionary of Biography* Volume 3: 501-503). His infamy was established when he was implicated in mutilating the body of the last male tribal Tasmanian Aboriginal, William Lanney in 1869. He

survived suspension from the Royal Hobart Hospital and admonishment, despite an official inquiry and a petition signed by many people shocked by this deed, and rose to become Premier of Tasmania for ten months from December 1878. Askunas and Crowther became embroiled over the lease of Chappell Island, then the most important of the Aborigines' muttonbird rookeries in Bass Strait (DEP Dorset 8/21). Chappell Island was crucial for their livelihood. Tenders for the occupation of the island for grazing only had been advertised in 1857, but nobody seems to have taken it up (*Hobart Town Gazette* 1 December 1857: 1108). John Thomas who was sent to survey the extent of the guano resources, found them to be largely non-existent, except on Cat Island. This helped the Aborigines in that it meant there was one less factor for them to deal with in the alienation of the islands. On the other hand, the scramble for guano speeded up the alienation process, because of the publicity concerning the grazing potential of the islands that followed the guano adventurers.

The Aborigines were scattered over many of the islands during the 1860s and occupied them by paying nominal, if any rent. Some new leases were issued at this time for terms of up to fourteen years (AOT LSD 209/2/224), but all to non-Aborigines (AOT LSD 209/2/219). However, soon afterwards, when Church of England missionaries began to take an interest in the Aboriginal community, the names of Aboriginal lessees appear in the government rent books (AOT LSD 209/2/227; TRE 21/2). Lucy Beedon applied to occupy Badger Island in December 1857 (AOT LSD 2/2/924). Together with her brother, James, they placed a deposit and eventually paid off fifty acres each on Badger Island beginning in 1868 (AOT TRE 21/2/49; DEP Dorset 7/70, 71); George Everett leased Passage and Forsyth Islands in 1860 for £6/8/- and £5 per annum respectively (AOT LSD 209/2/227). James Maynard and Henry Beedon held separately the lease for the Northern Sisters from 1872 to 1878 (AOT TRE 21/2/224, 399), while James Everett leased East Kangaroo Island in 1874 (AOT TRE 21/2/233).

Flinders Island did not interest the Aborigines, except for the hunting it provided. Apart from the large amount of money required to secure the lease, the only place of habitation on the island, at Wybalenna, reminded them of the suffering of their kinsmen (TPP 1862. Number 17: 3). After the lease of Malcolm Laing Smith expired the government in December 1861 offered the rental of Flinders Island for fourteen years (*Hobart Town Gazette* 4 February 1862: 185). One prospective party was Charles Nantes and James Hutton from Victoria who accompanied the Reverends Thomas Reibey and John Fereday on their first visit to the islands in March 1862 (Howard 1991: 78). First landing at Marshall Bay on Flinders Island they attempted to penetrate the interior but were driven back by impenetrable scrub (*Geelong Advertiser* 14 May 1862). Eventually Nantes

climbed what was probably Mt Tanner but was disappointed with what he saw. The land was dry and scrubby, in fact, "a vast barren desolateness". After landing on Chappell and Badger Islands with the two clerics who decided to cut short their visit, they all returned to George Town. Nantes and Hutton re-hired the *Gift* and returned to the Furneaux Group stopping off at Waterhouse, Clarke and Cape Barren Islands. They were disappointed with all three islands as none showed promise of extensive agricultural worth. Cape Barren Island had just been extensively burnt but they found no land fit for grazing:

I have said before that the scenery is beautiful, and it was after the wearisome toil in climbing our last ascent in these islands sitting down and enjoying the grand and magnificent prospect, my smoke and my rest, I felt a regret, almost a personal regret, that such a scene of beauty and extensive area of country should be so comparatively waste and valueless (*Geelong Advertiser* 14 May 1862).

Nantes' opinions were much echoed, as the island was totally unsuited for farming and therefore an ideal repository for the unwanted Aborigines. Later efforts by the government to turn Aborigines into agriculturalists on land largely unfit for farming and never taken up by farmers until well into the twentieth century were thus always doomed to failure.

The successful tenderer for Flinders Island from many applicants was J. J. MacLaine (AOT LSD 1/4/49; 2/3/102, 1035). However MacLaine did not taken up the lease and transferred it in August 1863 to T. B. Abbott and Robert Gardner of Collingwood, Victoria (AOT LSD 2/3/765). They secured the lease of the whole island for fourteen years from 1 September 1863 to 31 August 1877 for £112/10/6 per annum (AOT LSD 209/2/259; TRE 21/2/210). The lease remained with Gardner until 1886 except for an attempt at some partial splitting off (on paper) of about 67 lots of 500 acres in 1878. There were very few acceptors for these lots (*Hobart Town Gazette* 26 February 1878: 390; AOT TRE 21/3/193, 205, 207; LSD 209/2/413).

The government also continued to intervene in disputes between residents which had been recurring for many years. Dr James Allen had been given permission to occupy Clarke Island in 1847 and immediately attempted to evict John Thomas. Thomas complained and demanded protection (AOT LSD 2/2/838). He was not evicted for he continued to occupy and pay rent on what was a very small portion of the island for several years. The government likewise assisted the sealers by evicting trespassers such

as Charles Harley in 1853 from Tin Kettle Island, an island occupied by John Smith and Robert Rew (AOT LSD 2/3/307). In response Smith asked for a nineteen years lease which the government refused, offering him instead the island on an annual basis at £5 per year (AOT LSD 2/3/307). The government seemed to be adhering to the principle of priority in occupation and in November 1871 asked James Everett to quit Woody Island, presumably because the lease had been taken up earlier by Henry Robinson (AOT LSD 2/4/54(6158/1-)).

Arguments occurred among the sealers themselves. On Gun Carriage Island, an old sealer, John Riddle, held the lease to the whole island for £15 per year until 1860. Other sealers and their families still living on the island were made unwelcome and in 1860 brought their grievances before Fereday. The government in its reply to Fereday in November 1860 promised to protect the sealers and their families against "the oppression they complain of" and to cancel the lease if it continued (AOT LSD 1/52/652). The oppression did continue, and on 4 April 1862 Reibey asked the Surveyor-General on behalf of the 'sealers' (as they were still called in government circles), what their rights and privileges were on Gun Carriage Island (AOT LSD 1/52/652). Within the year some, including Thomas Beedon and Edward Mansell had moved to Preservation Island (TPP 1863. Number 48: 5) and within the decade to Cape Barren Island. John Riddle had the legal right to evict illegal occupiers (such as the other sealers) which tied the government's hand, despite its promise to cancel the lease. He remained for another twelve years on Gun Carriage Island before transferring his lease to Elizabeth Bishop in January 1872 (AOT LSD 209/2).

The Reverend Fereday acted as an agent for the inhabitants of the Furneaux Group in their land deals with the government since at least 1854 (AOT LSD 2/2/924). In December 1862 he applied on behalf of George Everett and James Beedon for Preservation Island and the Southern Sisters respectively (AOT LSD 1/51/636). In September 1864 he asked the Surveyor-General to prepare leases for George Everett on Preservation Island, Robert Dunbar on Little Green Island, Mrs Davis on Big Green Island and John Smith for 500 acres at Hogans Point on Cape Barren Island (AOT LSD 1/51/642, 644). The lease for John Smith was next to his lot for purchase and is the first known record of any land deals done by Aborigines on Cape Barren Island. Thomas Mansell also wished to purchase 40 acres, first on Passage Island and later, in December 1869, on Preservation Island next to "George Everit" [*sic*] (AOT LSD 1/39/153). He wanted to occupy Rum Island simultaneously, noting in his letter to the Surveyor-General, "I hope you will be my Frend...I am one of old hands Her, and haf Cast and have large family and no hum". He was advised that he could occupy Rum Island on

payment of £1 but it seems that he did not follow through this or any other request. In many cases however, the Aborigines found that the leases had already been taken by outsiders and thus were unavailable (AOT LSD 1/31/617).

As communications between the islands and the authorities in Hobart were very slow and unreliable, Fereday held money provided by the inhabitants to pay rent and land purchases. In 1866 he held £50 for Mrs Davis of Big Green Island, £13 for George Everett, and £20 for James Beedon of Badger Island (AOT LSD 1/51/465). It eventuated that Beedon's payments and others were in arrears to the sum of £28 and Beedon was required to pay up the balance or forfeit the island. Fereday apparently spent the funds appropriated by him. He wrote to Surveyor-General Calder in 1866, stating that at present he could not pay back any of the £28, but would do so in several months once he obtained a remittance of £300 from England (AOT LSD 1/51/471). Two years later, on 27 February 1868, he authorised the Surveyor-General to garnish £9/6/8 out of his monthly stipend for April, May and June to pay off the account owing (AOT LSD 2/3/1005). Fortunately none of the people who put their trust in Fereday were disadvantaged by his unwise use of their money and he continued to act on their behalf until his death in April 1871.

The occasional letter of petition from the community brought the subject of land alienation to the attention of the government but no action seems to have resulted. The Aborigines were not skilled in the art of political lobbying on their own behalf. It was only when concerned Church of England Ministers became involved in their welfare that the government took notice, and even then action was belated. The government's attitude may be illustrated by a letter from George Everett, who in December 1871 complained about the stock owned by Jules Virieux roaming freely on Chappell Island (AOT LSD 1/51/459). George Everett used the now tried-and-true emotional argument of the "...injury being done to us and our children" (AOT LSD 1/51/459). He further states:

The rest of the halfcastes in Common with myself have been led to hope that the Government intend to reserve Chappell Island for our use we therefore cannot help feeling the greatest alarm at seeing the only Rookery available to us being daily destroyed and ourselves and our children left to starve.

Several years previously the same sentiments had been expressed on behalf of the Aborigines by Benvenuto Smith (AOT LSD 1/53/619). Smith had written to the Surveyor-General in June 1866 stating that Chappell Island was the last remaining

muttonbird rookery for the Aborigines and the best in the Straits. The Aborigines, if deprived of their only means of obtaining a livelihood would starve and "become paupers". The island, Smith argued, had to be reserved for them. In response to this complaint Virieux was ordered to remove his stock from the island. The problem was further aggravated shortly afterwards when the apparent lack of government will to grapple with the issue saw another block of 50 acres sold on Chappell Island. To police the removal of stock from Chappell Island, George Everett was appointed a crown bailiff in April 1872 to be stationed on Badger Island (AOT LSD 2/4/51/6151[1]). Badger Island was only 1 km away, and had accommodation and other facilities that were absent on Chappell Island. Everett however, was unable to carry out the task so Benvenuto Smith was appointed in his place several months later (AOT LSD 2/4/51/6151[2, 3, 4]).

The government promised to reserve some islands (AOT LSD 1/53/621-623). Perhaps the inspection by a surveyor, Richard Hall, had hindered the Aboriginal cause (*Hobart Town Gazette* 23 July 1867: 1331-1332). Hall had visited the islands in 1866 surveying those parts selected by both Aborigines and non-Aborigines (DEP Dorset 7/70, 71; Dorset 8/21). In his report to Calder, Hall extolled the agricultural virtues of the islands, while mentioning that the Aborigines did not work hard but were occupied in sailing boats and catching muttonbirds. (Unfortunately, Aboriginal indolence was also a commonly held impression by non-Aboriginal Islanders.) The government was dilatory in most of its dealings with the Aborigines (and Hall's report would certainly not have helped), and the report was also probably unfair. The biggest difference between Aborigines and non-Aborigines was the Aborigines' lack of money, which put them at a considerable disadvantage. The Aborigines' principal income came from muttonbirding, which would have provided them with a sum of money to spend on items they could not have afforded previously, but little extra for capital accumulation. In the case of those who wished to purchase or rent land, some of the income earned would need to be put aside for that, but it was rarely sufficient. Many Aborigines found keeping up the payments impossible and very few became landowners. It was only after they had petitioned Governor Du Cane when he met with them on Goose Island in August 1871 that land was subsequently granted to them on Cape Barren Island (AOT CSD 7/45/833).

TENURE FROM 1870 to 1890

Focus on Cape Barren Island

The Aborigines expressed two main grievances to Du Cane. They deplored the destruction of muttonbird nests, eggs and chicks on Chappell Island by cattle straying

from the 50 acres freehold held by Jules Virieux (AOT LSD 2/4/54(6158/1-)[1]). Their second complaint was against non-Aboriginal lessees, even on Cape Barren Island, forcing them to move from land the Aborigines had occupied. They wanted land to be made available to them which they could with security call home. But the rapid removal of the Aborigines from other islands to Cape Barren Island continued and was completed by the end of the 1870s, less than 20 years after they first paid rent to occupy those islands. Blocks were surveyed by Surveyor Hirst and grant deeds issued for land on Cape Barren Island in 1873 to George Everett for five acres, John Smith for ten acres, William Brown for eight acres and Thomas Mansell for five acres (AOT TRE 21/2/294). One year later John Maynard obtained deeds for five acres on Cape Barren Island (AOT TRE 21/2/295). The land was sold to the Aborigines for £1 per acre, a unit sum comparable with the charge for larger blocks sold elsewhere in the Furneaux Group.

Other Aborigines to obtain grant deeds were R. Maynard, 40 acres on Long Island in 1875 (AOT TRE 21/2/298), James Beedon, 50 acres on Badger Island in 1876 (AOT TRE 21/2/300) and Lucy Beedon, 51 acres on Badger Island in 1877 (AOT TRE 21/2/301). Several Aborigines also attempted to purchase land on other islands, and although they were able to pay deposits and several instalments, eventually had to sell to non-Aborigines. Thus George Everett managed 7 instalments on 50 acres on Preservation Island before James Allen purchased the block in 1877 (AOT TRE 21/2/112, 117, 302). Within two years Allen had transferred his lease of crown land on the island to John MacLaine (AOT LSD 16/41/724).

The government also responded to other grievances and in July 1872 reserved several islands in Bass Strait to enable sealers and muttonbirders to "pursue their avocations" (*Hobart Town Gazette* 9 July 1872). By deeming muttonbirding to be the only means of livelihood for the majority of the Aborigines, the government only felt obliged to reserve some of the Bass Strait islands. The islands were unsuitable for agriculture because of their small size and rugged nature, so the government had nothing to lose by reserving them. Wright's Rock, Craggy Island, Hogan Group, Erith Island, Moriarty Rocks, Ninth Island and Tenth Island were reserved for sealing, while the Chappell Islands and Cat Island were reserved, presumably, for muttonbirding. Except for part of Chappell Island none of these had yet been alienated as leasehold or freehold.

The other main muttonbird rookery in the Furneaux Group, Great Dog Island, was not reserved because it was held under lease by Robert Gardner at £112/10/6 in 1877 (AOT TRE 21/2/335), a huge jump from when Catherine Barrett had it previously for £7 per year (AOT TRE 21/2/246). The large rent may have been due to the extensive

muttonbird rookery on the island, which Gardner rented out to the muttonbirders each year, and because dairy farming was proving profitable (Murray-Smith 1979: 65).

Robert Gardner and James Walden were Launceston merchants who had managers to look after their numerous holdings in the Furneaux Group. Gardner was born in 1837 in Scotland, emigrated to Australia as a boy, and settled in Victoria. He was living in Tasmania by at least 1869, several years after he first leased Bass Strait islands (*Examiner* 2 August 1915). Apart from Flinders and Great Dog Islands his holdings included Prime Seal Island for £55/10/- per year (AOT TRE 21/2/219), and other smaller islands. He died in 1915, leaving no legacy of his links with the islands as he rarely visited them. The main emphasis of the eulogy in his obituary was to state his support for rifle shooting as the basis of a type of vigilante group:

...he felt that teaching of men to shoot well was like an assurance that if their homes were ever attacked they would have men who knew how to handle a rifle to defend them (*Examiner* 2 August 1915).

James Walden is first mentioned as renting islands in the Furneaux Group in 1874 (AOT TRE 21/1/233) but may have been around earlier. Walden came to Tasmania from England in 1860 for health reasons. He founded a skin and leather business and became a very successful business man, paying over £1,000 annually in rates on all his properties (*Examiner* 14 November 1934). At one time he rented Storehouse, Rum, Southern and Northern Sisters, part of Flinders, Forsyth, Pasco, Roydon and Doughboy (near Long Island) Islands. Rents ranged between £1 and £21 per year. These islands would have been for pasturing stock, particularly sheep. Walden had tanneries in Launceston and probably bought seal, sheep and wallaby skins from the inhabitants to supply his tanneries. Both he and Robert Gardner were involved in the muttonbird trade, winning medals in the Calcutta Exhibition for 'yola' bird tallow and oil (*Examiner* 15 April 1884). He died on 13 November 1934 at the age of 104 years, retaining his faculties to the last day (*Examiner* 14 November 1934).

By 1873 nine islands were leased by non-Aborigines who in most cases made their homes on them. Within 10 years, in 1883, the figure had risen to 28 (AOT TRE 21). The only Aborigines renting or owning any island property other than on Cape Barren Island were Lucy Beedon and her brother, James, on Badger Island, where they ran up to 1,400 sheep, some of which belonged to other Islanders. In the years 1873 to 1882 there were 6,000 to 13,000 sheep in the Furneaux Group (TPP 1873-1882. Chief Inspector of Sheep Reports).

The agricultural pursuits undertaken on Great Dog Island were typical of what was happening on the other islands. They were usually occupied by one family, typically non-Aboriginal, with muttonbirding supplemented by farming. The manager for Robert Gardner ran dairy cows which, with sheep and cattle, thrived there (*Examiner* 28 May 1883). Formerly tobacco was grown but it was of very poor quality, fit only for sheep-wash and returning no profit (*Examiner* 28 May 1883). It currently grows wild in certain areas on the west coast of Flinders Island. Some of the families had hired help but they often proved troublesome. In 1868 a servant of Edward Bishop of Great Dog Island absconded and was fined £2 under breach of the Masters and Servants Act, 1856 (*Examiner* 28 January 1868).

The grievances continued, and in May 1880 Brownrigg had to ask the Surveyor-General, on behalf of the Aborigines, whether they were allowed the privilege to hunt on Flinders Island (AOT LSD 16/43/962). If that was taken away, then the Aborigines had no land that they could call their own. It was only two years previously that the Aborigines had petitioned the Governor to reserve the whole of Flinders Island for them (AOT LSD 2/4/54(6158/1-)[7]. In 1881 the government withheld from sale the western portion of Cape Barren Island for the Aboriginal Community (*Hobart Town Gazette* 15 February 1881: 246). The area consisted of scrub and lagoons, unsuitable for agriculture except by dint of much work and money. With Brownrigg in charge the people chose The Corner as the site for their new township and through a lottery drew subdivisional lots. During his visit in 1881 Brownrigg and the Aborigines discussed matters of rules and regulations, and muttonbirding on Chappell Island (Brownrigg 1979: 184). A store was to be opened, probably to compete with the one on Long Island owned by Thomas Barrett. A year later little progress had been made because of fear of no security of tenure, and because the government provided no direction for the administration of the Reserve through leases or sale of blocks.

In contrast non-Aborigines obtained much more of the freehold. Grant deeds were issued to Bridget M. Lee for 10 acres on Cape Barren Island in 1873 (AOT TRE 21/2/294); to Mary Jane Bates for 10 acres in 1873 (AOT TRE 21/2/295) and to Elizabeth Bishop for 192 acres on Vansittart Island in 1875 (AOT TRE 21/2/296); to Maria A. Brown for 203 acres on Big Green Island in 1875 (AOT TRE 21/2/297); to H. W. Taylor for 16 acres in 1875 (AOT TRE 21/2/298) and to James Fenton for 41 acres on Little Green Island in 1877 (AOT TRE 21/2/303); to John Holt for 39 acres on Little Dog Island in 1876 (AOT TRE 21/2/300); to Julius Virieux for 49 3/4 acres on Chappell Island in 1876 (AOT TRE 21/2/300); to William Lawton for 98 acres on Babel Island in 1876 (AOT TRE 21/2/300); to G. W. C. Baudinet for 40 acres on Kangaroo Island in

1876 (AOT TRE 21/2/300); to Charles Harley for 50 1/2 acres on Cape Barren Island in 1876 (AOT TRE 21/2/301); to John Vickery for 40 acres on Puncheon Island in 1877 (AOT TRE 21/2/301); to Ayde Douglas for 200 acres in 1865 (AOT LSD 209/2/177, 178) and William Barrett for 198 acres on Waterhouse Island in 1877 (AOT TRE 21/2/302); and to James Allen for 50 acres on Preservation Island in 1877 (AOT TRE 21/2/302). Some of these non-Aboriginal families had been in the Straits for many years. John Lee had a ticket of occupation for part of Cape Barren Island for 2/- per year in 1850 (AOT TRE 21/1/122). Similarly James Fenton and William Lawton had rented large acreages for several pounds per year on Bass Strait islands in 1849 (AOT TRE 21/1/47, 53). Charles Harley is first mentioned in the renting of a portion of Tin Kettle Island in 1852 (AOT TRE 21/1/232). By 1859 he was renting 500 acres at Puncheon Point on Cape Barren Island at £5 per annum (AOT LSD 209/2/201, 202). James Allen was a descendant of Dr Allen of the Aboriginal settlement.

After this, the tide turned. No more disposal of islands in the Furneaux Group occurred after these sales, except in the case of the largest island, Flinders. Within the last 50 years the government has been attempting to acquire freehold on islands it once sold, for wildlife conservation purposes as well as for muttonbirding.

TENURE FROM 1890 to 1910

The Opening up of Flinders Island

In 1889 the government permitted the sale of land on Flinders Island in blocks ranging from 15 to 320 acres (AOT LSD 16/71/397). This was a major upheaval in the lives of the inhabitants, because until then people lived on the small offshore islands, and used Flinders Island as an area of resource. From it they gathered firewood, hunted wallaby for skins and meat, and took other wildlife including waterfowl for food. Opening it up brought further immigration and the need for more services and contact with the outside world. The main centre of population was established at White Mark, later corrupted to Whitemark. The influx of people created employment opportunities and gradually Flinders Island developed, while the offshore islands became deserted as they could only provide limited and short-term opportunities.

In the first two years survey fees were paid on 6,826 acres and deposits on 5,811 acres (TPP 1890. Number 65: 3, 6) of which 37 non-Aborigines selected 5,518 acres ranging in area from 15 to 319 acres, the latter being the maximum allowed by the Waste Lands Act, 1870 (Table 4). One of the first purchasers was T. H. Holyman who placed a

deposit of 10/- on a 15 acre block on 26 June 1889 (AOT TRE 21/5/134) paying it off on 22 August 1889 for £14/10/- (AOT TRE 21/5/142). Holyman was a son of William Holyman, a master mariner with extensive interests in Bass Strait shipping. In contrast 14 Aborigines took up a total of 344 acres, ranging in size from 15 to 53 acres (AOT TRE 21/5/134-197).

Table 4. Purchasers of the first Sale of Crown Land on Flinders Island in 1889 and 1890 according to ethnic Background.

Non-Aboriginal		Non-Aboriginal		Aboriginal	
Name	Area (acres)	Name	Area (acres)	Name	Area (acres)
J R. Allport	16	T. H. Holyman	15	H. Armstrong	42
E. T. Boyes	314	A. Horne	201	Henry Beedon	38
A. D. Burt	319	E. A. MacLaine	319	Wm. Brown	16
B. G. Clarke	79	J. H. MacLaine	319	Jas. Everett	20
Alf Collis	47	Alex Robertson	313	Wm. Mansell	15
H. Collis	32	Wm. Robertson	316	T. Mansell	15
H. G. Collis Jr.	19	E. M. Robinson	100	David Maynard	53
Ada Cornish	74	A. L. Virieux	95	H. Maynard Sr.	15
Ros Cornish	27	Claude Virieux	158	Hy. Maynard Jr.	15
G. C. Dawson	16	J. Virieux	65	J. Maynard	16
G. F.-Evans	100	Jules Virieux	104	Josh Maynard	20
M. H. Ferguson	319	L. Virieux	25	John Smith	40
Wm. Ferguson	311	Mary Virieux	65	John Summers	15
P. Gardner	319	A. Whittle	91	J. Summers Jr.	24
R. Gardner	292	E. Whittle	25		
H. J. Gunderson	203	Eliz. Youl	103		
A. C. Hauland	200	J. Young	80		
Emily Holt	50	K. Young	69		
Wm. Holt	18				

(Source: AOT TRE 21/5; names are shown as written in TRE 21/5)

The majority of people in both groups paid off their land in annual instalments over fourteen years, many of the residents getting the money from muttonbirding (*Examiner* 18 February 1907). The cost of land was £1 per acre regardless of situation or size of block. Several people had trouble paying their bills in the mid-1890s due to a depression that gripped Australia around that time. These included Robert Gardner, although in his case it may have been due to oversight as he was frequently behind in payments even on his island leases. Default in payment resulted in fines and overdue charges levied (AOT TRE 21/7/56, 86; 21/8/107). The quality of the land was generally inferior when compared to areas of mainland Tasmania but the island had climatic advantages, particularly in the growing of fruit and vegetables (TPP 1895. Number 39: 10, 11).

The occupation of Flinders Island was slow and confined to the western side for many years before the land boom of 1909 (Table 5). Settlement radiated from the main population centres with only a few of the isolated lots taken up. This was put down to the lack of roads and safe anchorages for boats (TPP 1903. Number 31: 23). There were three jetties, all on the western side (TPP 1894-95. Number 39: 11). The establishment of a Road Board in 1906 and its successor, the Flinders Island Council, eventually led to a great increase in selection from 1909 by farmers from King Island, Tasmania and Victoria.

There were some speculators but they were hampered by the restriction of good agricultural land to the western coast, the eastern half having problems with drainage, destruction of timber by bush fires and remoteness. The remoteness made it difficult for the authorities to locate road reserves and value land which was variable in quality prior to permitting selection (TPP 1910. Number 22: 28), problems which were to remain largely unresolved till the land clearance schemes of the 1950s.

TENURE FROM 1910 TO PRESENT

The Cape Barren Island Reserve Acts of 1912 and 1945

The majority of Aborigines missed out on the benefits of the land boom as Cape Barren Island was bypassed as soon as Whitemark became the administrative centre for the Furneaux Group. The initial slow growth in the population of the Furneaux Group (in which the Aborigines formed a declining minority) was one of the reasons the government asked Police Commissioner Lord to report upon the state of the islands. His report (TPP 1908. Number 57) eventually resulted in the Cape Barren Island Reserve Act, 1912. The Act, which came into operation on 6 December 1912, was set up to

resettle about 50 Aboriginal families on surveyed blocks of land in the 6,000 acres of land set aside in 1881.

Table 5. Area of Crown Land sold on Flinders Island from the first Year, 1889.

Year	Area sold (acres)	Year	Area sold (acres)	Year	Area sold (acres)	Year	Area sold (acres)
1889	3,743	1910	14,345	1931	250	1952	92
1890	2,412	1911	105,171	1932	1,259	1953	1,081
1891	35	1912	6,546	1933	1,921	1954	1,511
1892	669	1913	2,518	1934	1,597	1955	139
1893	1,456	1914	3,104	1935	1,059	1956	90
1894	1,047	1915	8,223	1936	382	1957	860
1895	460	1916	4,410	1937	837	1958	120
1896	25	1917	501	1938	1,514	1959	150
1897	132	1918	0	1939	716	1960	300
1898	265	1919	3,975	1940	504	1961	437
1899	230	1920	2,844	1941	115	1962	0
1900	504	1921	2,936	1942	302	1963	380
1901	365	1922	2,850	1943	0	1964	2,191
1902	0	1923	2,608	1944	380	1965	796
1903	1,098	1924	1,548	1945	0	1966	2,748
1904	274	1925	1,482	1946	920	1967	4,727
1905	552	1926	1,411	1947	30	1968	2,626
1906	434	1927	4,590	1948	0	1969	3,783
1907	2,165	1928	719	1949	0	1970	464
1908	619	1929	2,187	1950	0		
1909	2,026	1930	2,476	1951	50		

(Source: Lands and Surveys Department Annual Reports)

To Lord, the term 'half-caste' had by now passed its original strict definition of a child resulting from a union between a tribal-born Aborigine and non-Aborigine, and had come to mean all coloured people. He commented that even the whitest of them had the

peculiarities, habits and customs of their darker cousins (TPP 1908. Number 57: 8). In other words the amount "of shades of grey" and origin, whether Maori, Tasmanian or Victorian Aborigine or white, should not now matter. The irrelevancy of colour and origin in Lord's report is important to note, because the dilution of these two features is often used today to challenge the Aboriginal claim to specialness and to government recognition of this claim.

The regulations of the Act laid down rules by which the Aborigines on Cape Barren Island were to live if they wished to have land granted to them. Most of the conditions were foreign to their way of life. The government had not learnt from all the visits of churchmen and its own officials, particularly surveyors, that an isolated Islander community with a unique heritage strongly linked to marine resources cannot be made to conform as would an urban/rural community on mainland Tasmania (an observation applicable not only to the Aboriginal community with its special way of life dependent on muttonbirding but to almost any isolated island community; Murray-Smith 1986: 210).

The purpose of the Act was to make land available free of rent for Aborigines to build homes, and for agricultural pursuits. It was to protect the Aboriginal community and give them an opportunity of "owning" their individual homes on the Reserve which previously was "...utilised as a common and gave no encouragement for individual effort...upon their own efforts success will depend" (TPP 1915. Number 22: 6). Ownership was not freehold but through the issue of a 99 year lease given on condition that the Aborigines complied with the Act. A Fund was constituted consisting of monies appropriated by Parliament and from transactions resulting from land deals. Licences could be issued for one homestead block and/or one agricultural block. Homestead blocks varied from 1 to 3 acres in area and agricultural blocks mainly from 46 to 50 acres. Only blocks that had been surveyed in the Reserve could be applied for. The surveyed land was generally uncleared and of varying quality. All blocks were contiguous regardless of terrain. These factors were to become major points of contention between Aborigines and the Lands and Surveys Department which administered the Act.

Once a licence was issued with respect to a homestead block, the applicant had to erect within two years a home of design and materials approved by the Minister, unless the block already contained a residence. The person or his family had to live on the homestead block for at least six months in every year, except in the case of illness. With respect to an agricultural block, no Aborigine was allowed to reside upon it without the consent of the Minister. The licensed occupier also had to securely fence the block and

cultivate or use it continuously for "agricultural, horticultural, or grazing purposes" (Cape Barren Island Reserve Act, 1912, Schedule 16 ii [b]). To be able to build homes or to use agricultural blocks, the Aborigines could apply for loans up to a maximum of £50 from the Fund. Repayments were half-yearly of £5 per annum over a period not exceeding ten years, or at a sum agreed to between both parties (AOT LSD 188/39HB). Very few people managed to abide by these payment schedules and duly forfeited their land (AOT LSD 187, 188).

The other major provisions of the Act included the encouragement of settlement by Aborigines in other parts of Tasmania, and the prohibition of intoxicating liquor on and within three miles of the Reserve. The enlarged area was presumably to cover tin mining leases held outside the Reserve by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal miners. Also, increasing the distance made it more difficult for Aborigines to obtain 'easy' liquor. Non-residents required permits to enter the Reserve, even Aborigines.

The structure of the Act was mainly a result of discussions between the government and Captain Bladon, the resident schoolteacher on Cape Barren Island, despite objections from the Aborigines. The Flinders Island Council consisting entirely of non-Aboriginals also contributed its opinions (FIC Minutes 8 July 1909, 17 February 1910, 2 June 1910, 7 December 1911). Bladon was probably the person who compiled the list of Aborigines eligible for land grants mentioned in Schedule 1 of the Act. George Everett in his letter to the *Mercury* of 16 November 1911 complained that Bladon's main thrust was that "we", the government and others who knew what was good for the Aborigines, must help them in spite of themselves (RS 40/1). As well as those named in the schedule, such persons included widows and descendants of the age of eighteen years and upwards of those named. Also entitled were the descendants of marriages contracted by three non-Aboriginals, William Brown, George Burgess and John Summers with Cape Barren Island Aboriginal women. Brown, Burgess and Summers had been resident on Cape Barren Island for many years, and had skills needed by the community such as boat building and carpentry. In contrast, an Aboriginal woman married to any other non-Aboriginal was not entitled to make application for a licence or lease. Even widows of Aboriginal men who later married white men were excluded, and were forced to leave their blocks, often with no alternative place to live. In all there were 36 'half-castes' living on the Reserve entitled to a licence. Other eligible people included fourteen not living on the Reserve, the majority being on Flinders Island, and the descendants of Brown, Burgess and Summers.

Administering the Act must have been a nightmare for the bureaucrats in Hobart and the administrators on Cape Barren Island. In the first eighteen months £628 was expended in surveys, valuations and compensation for freeholders within the Reserve for 600 acres of compulsorily acquired land (TPP 1915. Number 22: 6). Twelve people applied for the first agricultural blocks on 13 June 1913, and the first licence was issued to George William Burgess (the son of George Burgess, noted above) on 30 June 1913. Burgess also received his homestead block on 2 July 1913. Six Aborigines already had freehold title to small blocks varying in size from 5 to 25 acres (Cape Barren Island Reserve Act, 1912, Schedules 1, 2, 3, 4). By 1918 there were 27 houses, 973 sheep, 104 cattle and 22 horses on the Reserve. This was judged to be a satisfactory state of affairs (TPP 1918. Number 34: 6). Stock and fencing could be bought on advance from the Fund, but during the First World War the price of wire was so high that the government was not prepared to buy it. By 1924 43 agricultural and 34 homestead lots were held under licence, and three lots for which 99 year leases had been issued (TPP 1922. Number 24: 3). The government viewed this as very disappointing and unsatisfactory. Living conditions were said to be poor, while the children were drifting into the "bad habits" of their parents. In the 30 years that the system operated some 150 applications were processed (AOT LSD 189), although the majority of applications were in the early years.

The 1912 Act was eventually replaced by the Cape Barren Island Reserve Act, 1945. The major difference between the Acts was that under the 1945 Act, an Aborigine who met all the conditions of the Act (namely substantial improvements to the land to the value of not less than £1 per acre during the currency of the lease), was entitled to a free land grant of the blocks in his or her possession. Under the 1912 Act, the person was only entitled to a free rent period of 99 years. The 1945 Act also made it possible for the lessee to acquire land additional to the 50 acres agricultural lot if that was necessary to obtain a viable area to farm. Another important provision was an inbuilt expiry period of five years after its enactment. After 1950, any lands that had not been granted were to become ordinary crown land and available to any person, whether residents of the Reserve or not. However, the 1945 Act made no mention of widows or descendants of the age of eighteen years or upwards, thereby excluding them by default from applying for leases. Otherwise the Acts were similar, containing the same administrative details governing entry to the Reserve, alcohol restrictions and other matters.

Section 26(1) of the 1945 Act also stated that the right of a lessee to a grant ceased at the expiration of the sixth year after the lease commenced. The government did not want the social welfare of the Aborigines on its hands indefinitely. By this measure, and by the six years expiry deadline, it hoped that the problem of what to do about the Aborigines

would be resolved. During the first year 32 persons applied for leases and much land was cleared and ploughed. Community pride was enhanced by the holding of a vegetable and flower garden competition (TPP 1947. Number 13: 4).

Some Aborigines had small farms on which they employed others for short periods:

Well my father always seemed to have money you know. Like he had a little farm and he lived off the land and that, always had like his sheep, his wool, sell his wool. He wasn't as hard up as what like a lot of them was on Cape Barren at that time.

Well dad used to supply a lot of work for the young people. He was sort of backbone. Like having the farm and that he'd make work for them. Like probably get a couple of young fellas over shearing time. Probably a bit of fencing or cutting posts and that. I don't know how the rest lived. I think they just lived day by day like they mostly doing now. In those days the dole was five bob, well I mean you'd go to the shop with five bob and buy a sugar bag full of food. You just try with five bob now and try and buy, how much you would buy? You can't even buy a packet of crackers for five bob can ya, like fifty cents, so I suppose in lots of ways better off in those days than they are now (Ruth Maynard interview).

But had things changed? In 1948 another Select Committee investigated conditions on the island (TPP 1948. Number 22). Their inspection showed that 29 residents held leases covering 45 lots; 23 of these were agricultural blocks and 22 homestead blocks. Between them four of the residents owned 555 sheep, six owned 37 cattle, and two owned 5 horses. Of the land, 350 acres was under cultivation and fifteen lessees had been granted advances of £50 to improve their blocks (TPP 1948. Number 25: 3). However the Select Committee considered that little real improvement had occurred. The greatest problem facing the people, lack of employment and therefore the lack of money, was constantly present in the 1930s and 1940s. The Aborigines still had no regular employment and no incentive to improve their holdings. The Committee recommended that the Reserve be closed and that the population be gradually assimilated into the rest of the Tasmanian community through inducements such as housing and employment. This was to be the government's policy for almost the next twenty years, until the surge of land rights and self determination arose in the 1970s. The Committee's other recommendations were that the government institute a thorough investigation into the

muttonbird industry, particularly the processing and marketing of muttonbirds, and that attention be given to the health and education of the children, many of whom were undernourished. A pilot survey in 1956 suggested that the majority of children continued to suffer, in this case from a low vitamin C intake (Howeler 1961: 51).

On expiry of the Act, 22 of the 28 lessees had improved their holdings sufficiently to qualify for a free grant. Also 19 of the 28 had repaid the full amount of their loans, mainly from their muttonbird income. The number of stock was slightly up since 1948 (TPP 1951. Number 30: 4). The land not granted was mostly taken up by local residents and the government must have been relieved to see the 1945 Act expire. The Cape Barren Island Reserve Act 1950, which amended several sections of the 1945 Act, ceased to exist in 1958 under the Statute Law Revision Act, 1958.

The government fulfilled all its obligations to the former lessees of the Reserve in 1952 (TPP 1953. Number 22: 4). Grants were issued for land improved in accordance with the requirement of the Act; the government farm and homestead, farm equipment and livestock were sold; the recreation hall was vested with the Flinders Island Council, and the land on which the church had been erected was sold to church trustees. The Aborigines on Cape Barren Island were now left on their own.

The problem of unemployment caused some families to leave permanently, and others temporarily for work such as fruit-picking. By the mid-1960s the population had fallen to about 60 people, of whom some found work on a grazing property established at Modder River on crown land and land bought off Aborigines at attractive prices (Ryan 1981: 249). But emigration continued through the 1960s and 1970s. Through factors largely beyond their control, in 100 years most of the Aborigines had been forced off small islands onto Cape Barren Island, then onto mainland Tasmania.

SUMMARY

Ever since sealers established the first permanent settlement in the Furneaux Group they had been under pressure from authority to move elsewhere. Laws enacted to force them to move were ignored, but later the use of rents and disposition of land through purchase had the required effect.

The Aborigines suffered a progressive land alienation. Gradual deprivation of their homelands was sanctioned by the government. First the chase for land, guano, then more land from the 1850s to 1890s saw outsiders using the land title system to obtain

possession of the islands. Aborigines tried the same system but could not compete because they lacked capital, and were disadvantaged by isolation in communication with government. Land auctions were carried out in Launceston, not on Cape Barren Island. Further, the islands were being opened up for grazing. Few Aborigines had large herds of stock and most were not farmers.

The Aborigines had friends to help them. Reverend Fereday was the first to act as agent in their land deals. When outside interest was shown in the acquisition of islands in the 1860s some were sold. These sales were the first and last. However the damage had been done. By the early 1870s many of the Aborigines had been repatriated to Cape Barren Island, and settled principally upon the western end of the island. Not wishing to lose Cape Barren Island, they petitioned the government to reserve part of it for them. The government acquiesced. The Reserve did not guarantee economic independence; it only gave them security to establish homes.

Continuing expansion of settlement on Flinders Island pushed the Aborigines further into the Cape Barren Island enclave and a dependence on government. They were looked upon as a problem. Solutions over the next 90 years began with segregation and protection from liquor and bad characters, including other Aborigines, before changing to assimilation, with offers of re-settlement assistance off Cape Barren Island, and finally to self determination. There was also a change in focus in that the growing Aboriginal population was increasingly living on the Tasmanian mainland and not on Cape Barren Island. They were now not isolated, but could lobby for their rights with the chance of being heard. It is to these issues, the social development of Tasmania's Aboriginal population, that we now turn.

CHAPTER 6

SOCIAL CHANGES AMONG THE ABORIGINAL POPULATION

The old Half Cast men that I knew 30 to 35 years ago were really decent men. They were honest & thrifty and did not use bad language and would not tolerate it being used in their presence. Their clothing was very plain but very clean and they were particular to the point of being finicky over their food. They all had good gardens and had not much time for the white man except for the ones they could trust and they used much cunning in trying them out (LL MS 11803 Box 2152/5, Jackson to Cottam, 17 August 1944).

The social development of the Aborigines can be said to have commenced with their desire to educate their children. Up to the appointment of the first schoolteacher in 1863, largely through money found by the government and some from the Aborigines themselves, children were taught by their parents. Despite the difficulties of such a home education, the first and second generation Aborigines were largely literate or semi-literate, and knew that to get on in the world, which was changing rapidly around them, education was a priority. Altogether, 40 years were to elapse from the 1850s, when the Aborigines made homes on many of the islands, to the appointment of a schoolteacher to Cape Barren Island on a permanent basis.

EDUCATION

The First Attempt

After his first visit to the Furneaux Group in 1862, Reverend Thomas Reibey brought the lack of educational facilities for children to the attention of the government. He considered that one of the more central islands should be chosen for the school as the

teacher could not be expected to travel around the islands in such treacherous waters and weather (TPP 1862. Number 17: 3). Flinders Island was ruled unsuitable mainly because "...of its having been the prison of their forefathers, and partly from the impression that the bad water helped to shorten the lives of the natives". But the old bricks could be used (TPP 1862. Number 17: 3). In September 1862 the House of Assembly resolved that £250 be appropriated towards providing a schoolmaster and catechist for "the half-caste and other inhabitants of the Furneaux Group, provided a like amount be raised by private subscription" (House of Assembly Journals 1862. Volume 8: 115, 141). Reibey made a passionate plea at the Church Synod for the money:

...the Islanders were attached to the Church, made use of her services, and were our own people. There was much that was interesting and pleasing in their character, and as the only descendants of the Aborigines they had great claims upon the Colony and the Church. The mission was to the full as interesting as that to the Pitcairn Islanders or the half-castes, of Tristan d' Acunha: in fact it was similar in character. If we allowed the matter to drop, others would try and make terms (*Church News* 20 October 1862: 79).

The money could not be raised and for some years the project languished. There was some discussion whether the site of the schoolhouse should be on East Kangaroo, Badger or Cape Barren Islands (House of Assembly Journals 1864. Volume 9: 96; AOT LSD 1/51/646). East Kangaroo Island was rejected because of the lack of firewood, permanent water, a boat harbour and its remoteness. It was also occupied by Alicia Stafford, a widow with four children. She had once lived with her husband and five children at Apple Orchard Point on Cape Barren Island, a spot that Reibey once thought would be suitable for a school (TPP 1863. Number 48: 5). It was central, accessible to the other islands, and had abundant water and firewood and good land for gardening and agriculture. He changed his mind after he visited Cape Barren Island again the following year.

Alongside the difficulty of finding a site, a schoolmaster was also impossible to find, as the criteria set down by the Reverend Richardson, who visited the Furneaux Group in 1863, could not be met. He wanted a person who could perform outstanding mental and physical feats:

...he must know how to row and sail his boat, swim well if necessary, put up with the hardest fare and accommodation and withal have a

considerable amount of judgement and patience, and a heart full of zeal for this kind of duty (*Church News* 20 January 1863: 125).

A letter signed by 37 Aborigines and non-Aborigines from the islands petitioned Reverend Fereday for a missionary (*Church News* 21 May 1863: 172). Finally the community took matters in their own hands and invited Edwin Richardson from Victoria to teach a class of about ten children on Badger Island (Morgan 1986: 56; TPP 1863. Number 48: 5). Richardson drew salary from a government grant which was discontinued once he left (House of Assembly Journals 1869. Volume 17: 100). He and his family stayed only several months as he could not apparently "satisfy his own standards" (House of Assembly Journals 1869. -Volume 17: 100).

Reibey never returned to the islands after 1866. In 1870 he was involved in court proceedings, charged with the seduction and rape of a married woman (Robson 1991: 62). He withdrew from ecclesiastical duties, and in spite of all the scandal was elected to Parliament and became Premier of Tasmania from July 1876 to August 1877. He continued to take a keen interest in subjects concerning the islands and when Premier supported the scheme to place a policeman in the Furneaux Group although recognising that many obstacles (for example remoteness and lack of capital) were in the way (AOT CSD 10/6/89[4]).

Reibey showed a genuine interest in the people, trying desperately to solicit funds to buy a mission boat so that visits could be more frequent than once every two or three years. His first yacht, the *Gift*, was built at a cost of £600 and launched in March 1866 (*Examiner* 22 March 1866). To finance her Reibey relied on donations (*Examiner* 7 January 1865) and appeals through the Church (*Church News* 21 November 1864; 1 June 1866). These came to very little and eventually Thomas Reibey was "forced to abandon his attempt for the benefit of the half castes" and was said to be £300 to £400 out of pocket (*Church News* 1 June 1867). The *Gift* was sold to be used as a coastal vessel (*Examiner* 30 January 1868) and a new boat, the *Pearl*, was built from the proceeds. Constructed from Huon pine, it was cutter rigged and 34 feet in length, but was found to leak and sold at auction soon after (*Examiner* 7 March 1868, 21 March 1868, 23 May 1868). In the meantime, Reibey continued his efforts, but it was nearly ten years after the first attempt in 1863 before another teacher was found, this time funded solely by the government.

The Second Attempt

After five more years of procrastination, Parliament in 1869 voted the sum of £200 as salary for a schoolteacher "among the half-caste natives of the islands in Bass's Straits" (House of Assembly Journals 1869. Volume 17: 111). Henry Collis was appointed (at a salary of £125 per year) and eventually provided with a residence and schoolhouse on Badger Island (*Examiner* 6 April 1872). The materials were supplied around May 1872, at which time his wife and family joined him. Collis and his wife shared the teaching load, Mrs Collis receiving a stipend of £25 per annum (AOT CSD 7/14/2). In 1873 Henry was teaching at Long Beach on Cape Barren Island while his wife taught at Badger Island. Usually only about half of the 17 to 33 children enrolled from 1875 to 1879 attended school (TPP 1875-1879. Board of Education Reports), with Brownrigg placing the blame on the illicit trade in liquor (AOT CSD 10/6/89[5]). But there seems no doubting their commitment despite the widespread apathy, Henry even transferring his school tent to Chappell Island during the muttonbird season (Murray-Smith 1979: 54).

Collis' duties included caring for the health of the community. On his appointment, the Aborigines already had homes on Cape Barren Island and a daily routine of house to house visiting seems to have been established. This practice, according to Collis, spread infectious diseases that could be prevented with vaccinations (AOT CSD 13/16/168). Collis feared a repeat of the typhoid fever which struck the community on Chappell Island in 1879 during the muttonbird season (TPP 1879. Number 56). The government spent £10 on providing sanitary measures "to preserve the Islanders in Bass Str. from typhoid fever" (TPP 1881. Number 44: 1, 31). These measures involved vaccination, but the Aborigines were reluctant to take the vaccine as it meant lancing the skin. They did not have to, because soon afterwards, in 1881, Collis retired from schoolteaching due to ill-health (AOT CSD 13/16/168). The school closed on 31 December 1882 (Statistics of Tasmania, 1883: 304). Collis spent the remainder of his days until his death in 1895 at Emita on Flinders Island (*Examiner* 20 June 1895). The next schoolteacher was not appointed until 1890 and was stationed permanently at The Corner on Cape Barren Island, which by then had become the centre for the Aboriginal population.

The Third Attempt

The new school was built in 1889, with the teacher partly controlled by the Education Department, and partly by the Church of England (Hart 1963: 50). Edward Stephens was appointed after careful selection but experienced difficulties. The children had been

running wild for almost a decade, and were very shy. Bishop Montgomery and the school-inspector who accompanied him on his second visit in 1892 thought them to be of low intelligence, though prettily dressed and clean (Hart 1963: 48; *Church News* 1 March 1892: 614). Despite the selection process Edward Stephens was not suited for the job. He had an alcohol problem and clashed personally with the Aborigines. His behaviour at Cape Barren Island was very erratic:

I had to do without breakfast — no coffee — my wife said she wanted to save it — but she does not seem inclined to save her tea — I have to suffer — this sort of thing has been going on all this year and I now record it, that this has been the most horrible year I can ever remember. I have not touched a drop of intoxicating drink during the whole year (ML MSS 1248/2).

In 1894 Edward Stephens began to provide for his retirement and carved a new farm out of the scrub at Badger Corner on Flinders Island. He carried all the material to the home site by hand and in a wheel barrow (*Church News* 1 August 1894: 123; *Examiner* 1 October 1894). Stephens retired from teaching in 1897, handing the job to his son, Charles. Close to his home at Badger Corner he set up a small private school for his grandchildren and others, naming it the "Sapphire River Grammar School" (Tom Diprose interview). He wrote several very patronising articles about the Aborigines, supposedly at the instigation of Bishop Montgomery, portraying them as an inferior race (Stephens 1898: 355; RS 40/3). He did give the Aborigines their due though in that they had been deceived harshly by merchants and "...subject to a system of commercial roguery of a most deplorable character" (RS 40/3). The several examples given by Edward Stephens show that the Aborigines had good reason to hate the white merchants.

The Final Attempt

Charles Stephens found the job difficult and with sickness in the family resigned in 1905. He remarked of the "petty complaints and grievances being legion...but I was ever fortunate in sending them [parents] home in a good humour" (CBI School Visitors Journal, 1905). The school radius had increased from two to four miles in June 1902. This meant that school-attendance was compulsory for anyone living within the zone. To some children this meant a long walk there and back which would not have been conducive to regular attendance, with the occasional wild cattle scaring younger children and thus giving them plenty of inducement to play truant. Some parents did not dissuade

their truant children and were sent caution notes from the school authorities or Flinders Island Council.

G. W. Knight took over from Charles Stephens on 17 September 1906 after a lapse of 9 months without a teacher. Average daily attendances increased from 24 to 48 three months later, and within one year to 53, with a total enrolment of 62 (CBI School Visitors Journal, 20 December 1906, December 1907). Knight set up a fife and drum band through the purchase of fourteen fifes and a donation of six fifes and a kettle drum from Miss Barrett who lived on Long Island (CBI School Visitors Journal, December 1907). Visitors were welcome to watch the children doing their work and often presented gifts such as lollies, biscuits and toys (CBI School Visitors Journal, 11 January 1909). Knight left in 1911 and Captain Bladon took over, staying for almost eighteen years. Average daily attendances never reached the numbers obtained by Knight, with Bladon frequently noting the absence of children for two to three months because of the 'birding' season.

Children were required to attend school until the age of thirteen or fourteen when the majority left, as the lack of full-time employment was a disincentive for continuing studies (CBI School Visitors Journal, 25 July 1944). Few of the families living near the tin mines at Rookes River sent their children to school because it was beyond the four mile limit, although they had the opportunity of correspondence school. Such a way of being educated is remembered by Rachel Quillerat:

I would have started school when I was going on for ten. In between Mum caring for the family, Mum had to try and do correspondence school with me. One particular day she was sitting there and I was pretty dumb and I had to go through the ABC with her. She used to have a cane on the table or stick. She'd go AB and made me, so I could only get up to the N. I'm standing there and Mum says how many times Rachel, you've been through the ABC...She said once more and if you don't know what the next letter is she said, look out for your soul. I went M, N, and she picked up the stick. I said, well if that the N that must be the N's fowl egg, that was the O (Rachel Quillerat interview).

Some newcomers were very shy. In 1936 one new boy would not come any closer than the front verandah on his first day (CBI School Visitors Journal, 26 May 1936). So the prospect of not having to go to school but joining their family in muttonbirding, hunting, gathering yacca gum, fruit picking and other work was welcomed by the children, but

exasperated the teachers. On Cape Barren Island, school closed for the muttonbirding season as early as 5 March and reopened officially as late as 25 May (CBI School Visitors Journal, 5 March 1921, 25 May 1942). Similar dates would have operated on Flinders Island but under stricter control because not every child from there went muttonbirding. In general school opened when the first families returned from the muttonbird islands. On several occasions, families did not return until well into June, having been storm-bound on the islands (CBI School Visitors Journal, 7 June 1916).

The teachers on Cape Barren Island were generally appointed for two years and the majority only stayed that long. Between 1890 and 1993 the school has seen the arrival of 29 teachers. They have had a very difficult task and not all were suited to the island. Apart from teaching children of all ages in the one schoolroom, up until approximately 1970 they performed all government duties, being the crown land bailiff, paramedic, funeral director and pastor. From the 1930s to the 1970s, the teachers had small classes with rarely more than 20 children. For the last ten years average daily attendance has been five students, most of them being under ten years of age. For teachers on Cape Barren Island, their attempts to educate the children must have been frustrating, as the majority of children left once they reached the age they could officially leave.

CHURCHMEN AND THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF THE ABORIGINES

Canon Brownrigg

While the perceived problem of education was being solved, visiting Church of England Ministers tried to improve the character of the Aborigines in the way they thought best. In the school building at Long Beach, Canon Marcus Brownrigg held his church services and, from January 1877, his lectures on temperance. Brownrigg was a strong advocate of temperance, and in his view, and that of Bishop Bromby, liquor was the basis of the Aborigines "misery" (AOT CSD 10/6/89[5], 11/1/790; Murray-Smith 1979: 146). He got many of the Aborigines to make total abstinence pledges, but having been made in the enthusiasm of the moment, they were rarely kept. He and Collis complained of the illicit trade in alcohol, which included periodic visits by a mainland publican, and even by "a Chinaman" (Murray-Smith 1979: 212). The problem of illicit trade was also of concern to the Aboriginal community at this time (AOT CSD 10/6/89[2]). George Everett on his own behalf, together with a petition from twelve Aborigines and non-Aborigines, called for police protection against "spirited" youths and liquor in 1875 and 1877 respectively (AOT CSD 10/6/89[1, 3]). Brownrigg thought that the people would willingly pay to

have a policeman through a muttonbird tax, but on the proviso that Chappell Island be reserved exclusively for them (AOT CSD 10/6/89[5]; Brownrigg 1979: 137). Nothing came of this proposal.

In about August 1875 Lucy Beedon notified the George Town police that two non-Aboriginals intended going to the wreck of the *British Admiral* on King Island to pilfer it for any liquor that they could later resell (AOT CSD 10/6/89[2]). They were to sail from the Furneaux Group via Victoria to cover their tracks in the cutter *Julia* owned by Harry Armstrong. According to the police "...they intend returning to these islands in the Straits for the purpose of disposing of the spirits in Exchange for mutton birds, oil, and any other saleable commodities that the Islanders can offer them" (AOT CSD 10/6/89[2]). To the police the intended sale was worrisome but not as much as the loss of customs duty on the liquor.

The venture does not seem to have occurred. At least no one got caught, but it helped to stir up the government to place a policeman eventually on the islands. Liquor was easily obtainable from Thomas Barrett who set up the first store in the Furneaux Group, on Long Island. The store was in existence by at least 1877, and Barrett disguised the sale of liquor to the Aborigines by calling them "caps" (AOT CSD 10/6/89[6]). A bottle or "cap" of brandy or gin cost 4 or 5/-. Other sellers of liquor were reported to be Thomas Barrett's brother Samuel, Allan Smith and Mrs Harley. No action was taken against any of these people and Brownrigg continued to visit them while the government appointed in 1883 Allan Smith, a son of Malcolm Laing Smith, as special constable to "uphold the law". He had offered his services as a constable in 1878 but his offer was then refused. Smith was based at Rocky Head on the southern coast of Cape Barren Island, about 20 km away from The Corner.

Brownrigg has been described as a "stern upholder of the old moral order" (Murray-Smith 1979: xx). The community during Brownrigg's time had a group identity and group leadership which Lucy Beedon fulfilled. Brownrigg must have deemed it worthwhile putting a great deal of effort into his temperance pledges, perhaps on account of the stories he heard. Whatever he thought of the Aborigines did not stop his enthusiasm to visit them — though later on it seems that the visits were also an excuse to try out his homemade canoes!

Bishops Bromby and Sandford

It was more than 20 years between the episcopal visitations of Bishops Nixon and Bromby. Charles Bromby took over from Nixon in 1864 and not until he had been incumbent for thirteen years did he visit the Furneaux Group, joining Brownrigg's fifth visit in January 1876. He knew all the problems of attempting to solicit funds for a Furneaux Mission from Tasmanian churchgoers and the discouragement that Reibey and Brownrigg suffered when funds were not forthcoming (*Church News* 2 December 1878: 377). The Mission in which Reibey had said the descendants of the Aborigines had a claim upon the colony, and upon the church (which had once regarded the Aborigines as Church of England faithful) was now degraded. The church's hierarchy reflected the apathy, with 20 years elapsing between episcopal visitations. Missionary work now meant spreading the gospel to 'real' heathens, such as the Chinese tin miners in northeast Tasmania (*Church News* 1 May 1882: 5). The Board of Missions claimed that there was not a single representative of the Aborigines in Tasmania and that the Furneaux Mission was only in "a certain sense" a mission to the heathen (*Church News* 1 May 1882: 5). The Aborigines professed Christianity even though visitations were few, whereas the Chinese were not of the Christian faith.

Bromby sailed to the Furneaux Group from Hobart in the lighthouse supply vessel *Southern Cross* (Murray-Smith 1979: 120), and stayed several days visiting Goose, Badger and Cape Barren Islands. He was unimpressed generally with the people. According to Bromby, with the exception of the Beedons and Everetts, the moral character of the inhabitants was influenced by drink, the inability to save and a life as "lotus-eaters" (*Examiner* 8 February 1876). In June he wrote to the government drawing attention to "the undesirableness of the islands being let to strangers from the mainland and the presence of facilities for the sale of intoxicating drinks to the halfcastes" (AOT CSD 11/1/790). To the police however, once custom duty was paid such trade was not against any law — except that of Brownrigg and Lucy Beedon (*Tasmanian Illustrated Supplement* 1886, 1[10]: 2-3).

Bishop Sandford, the incumbent after Bromby, visited for the first time during Brownrigg's thirteenth and last visit (*Church News* 1 April 1885: 456-457). Enthusiastic about the islands, he visited them twice more within nine months, but spent his time at the lighthouses, paying only occasional visits to others when circumstances allowed (*Church News* 1 July 1885: 503; 1 March 1886: 630). Sandford's visitations did little to pressure his congregation to dig deeper into their pockets, instead eliciting such responses as:

...an appeal is made for pecuniary assistance to enable the Bishop to appoint a catechist or clergyman to the islands, on the ground of the impecuniosity of the Islanders; this, I think, from my knowledge of them, is unnecessary, as they are nearly all well-to-do people...(*Church News* 1 May 1885: 462).

This correspondent's knowledge was scant because, with the exception of some non-Aboriginals, the majority of the Aborigines had very little money, and could not conceivably have been deemed well-off. This did not put off the Bishop's wife setting up a Furneaux Mission Work Party in which she invited some 30 to 40 women to sew "useful garments" that could be sold (*Church News* 1 December 1885: 583). After goods to the value of about £10 were sold collections dropped and donations for the Furneaux Mission were as difficult to obtain as always. In this case, the old adage, "out of sight, out of mind" continued to be true.

Bishop Montgomery

The Furneaux Group and King Island were in Bishop Montgomery's special charge and it seems unusual that no local clergy ever accompanied him. This is probably because Montgomery saw his role as a missionary bishop, remarking that "great questions such as education, temperance, social problems between classes come to me as duties" (*Australian Dictionary of Biography* Volume 10: 559). He had a special missionary zeal for all isolated areas in Tasmania and took it upon himself to visit them as often as he could. He acted as a link between the Aborigines and the government, seeking recognition for his efforts from them but never receiving any. It has been suggested that "this was Montgomery's greatest effort, and his greatest failure" (Hart 1963: 47).

Montgomery believed that the people should not be judged according to 'white' standards, but that protection could not last for ever. One year after his first visit he was lamenting that the Aborigines had broken the trust he was expecting of them with respect to the muttonbird regulations he had helped to have proclaimed (see below) — so even Montgomery was probably judging them by his own standards (*Church News* 1 June 1892: 682). The Aborigines formed a very closed community and mistrusted outsiders, especially those (like Montgomery) who had instant answers to their problems.

Before relationships soured, however, he wrote that he had the four happiest days he had known during his second visitation in February 1892 (*Church News* 1 March 1892: 614). A huge welcome arch of flowers and evergreens was erected in his honour on

Cape Barren Island, and a petition of warm welcome was presented to him and later signed by 81 adults. He did his own chores, cut his own firewood and brought his own tent so that he did not have to rely on the schoolteacher for accommodation. He nailed up a board painted with the words 'Bishopscourt' on the front entrance, and held court with the Aborigines who congratulated him over the recent muttonbird regulations. But most of all he dealt with church matters such as choosing a site to build a new church and celebrating the first public wedding on the island. A religious zeal burned within Montgomery, 'a labour of love', and when the Aborigines seemed to present the same he could only write: "There is more peace and goodwill here, more real unity than we can find almost anywhere upon the mainland" (*Church News* 1 March 1892: 615).

The church was dedicated in January 1893 and named the 'Church of the Epiphany'. As if to mark the historic occasion, five of the six Aborigines still alive who had tribal-born mothers, were photographed by Montgomery sitting on the front steps of the church. Montgomery decreed that its "doors are never to be locked night or day" (*Church News* 1 March 1893: 818). A bible was donated by a sister of Marcus Brownrigg, which is still held in the church almost 100 years later. The first marriage in the church occurred in June 1894 when the daughter of Edward Stephens married Henry Briant who lived at Badger Corner. The couple had nine children who all went muttonbirding with their parents on Chappell and Little Dog Islands. Two were still alive in 1993 and living in their parents' home.

The church was built on top of a rise several hundred metres away from the school and close to the homes of the Aborigines. It was a windy spot and final touches to the building had not been completed at the time of dedication. It required painting on the outside and a few additions inside. By 1902 it was still unpainted and leaning so dangerously that it had to be braced, whilst services had to be held in the schoolroom (*Weekly Courier* 31 December 1904: 35). However repairs were done to it and at the time of the vice-regal visit of Sir Harry Barron in 1911 it had new concrete foundations while the exterior was in good order. The brass fittings were said to be "substantial and scrupulously clean and nicely arranged" (RS 40/3).

Within several months of his return to Hobart Montgomery was having doubts about the effectiveness of his efforts on behalf of the Aborigines. A friend had told him that they were taking immature muttonbirds for oil contrary to the regulations (*Church News* 1 June 1892: 682). If this was true "I feel that my own reputation is at stake in the matter: for I have led my readers to expect better things of these people" he wrote (*Church News* 1 June 1892: 682). The story was true. He was not helped by Edward Stephens who

was continually in difficulties with the Aborigines (Hart 1963: 59, 62). He was pleased though that the new constable, Mr Napper, who had taken over from Allan Smith, was to be located at the township instead of being stationed at Rocky Head about 20 km away. Rocky Head may have been chosen originally for the police station because it was outside the Reserve, opposite Clarke Island where the magistrate John MacLaine resided, had a sheltered anchorage for the police boat, and was a point of call for the mail boat which first ran in 1885 (*Examiner* 1 June 1885). It was not until 1900 that the constable was stationed at the township (*Church News* 1 September 1900: 142).

The Aborigines associated Montgomery with Stephens because he defended the schoolteacher against their accusations of general misconduct and dereliction of his teaching duties (Hart 1963: 63). This isolated Montgomery from the Aborigines and his articles in *Church News* reflect the change. On his fourth visit he showed his lantern slides again and he later recorded uncertainty over whether the Aborigines had appreciated the pictures as much as they had previously (*Church News* August 1894: 123). His sadness in being misrepresented when he believed that everything he was doing for the Aborigines was for their own good, was accentuated when some Aborigines accused him of being a paid officer of the government because he and the government always had similar views (*Church News* 1 April 1896: 446). Montgomery strongly denied this, but the damage had been done.

Before the next trip to the Furneaux Group a benefactor took pity on him and provided the materials for a small hut which was erected by Stephens. The new, more permanent 'Bishopscourt' became Montgomery's temporary home and also lodgement for such government visitors as Constable Urquhart while the new police station was being erected. This association further tarnished Montgomery's standing within the community. The small hut was removed in 1915 in a dilapidated condition (CBI School Visitors Journal, 14 June 1915).

In 1900, on his second last visitation, Montgomery had a quiet time as the whole of Cape Barren Island was deserted for the muttonbird season (*Church News* 1 September 1900: 142). On his last visit he spent one and a half days out of the four on Cape Barren Island. He felt privileged "...to be conducted to the mainland for the last time by a prominent member of the community for whom I have laboured so hard for twelve years". This was Captain Phillip Thomas.

Despite his ten visits to Cape Barren Island, Montgomery never became a confidante of the people. He remained on the outside with all the other observers, to whom the

Aborigines were shy and introverted. Montgomery must also have been naive. He stated that in the three years that the school was in existence, its influence on the community was such that he detected not an instance of sexual 'immorality' among the people (*Examiner* 21 February 1893).

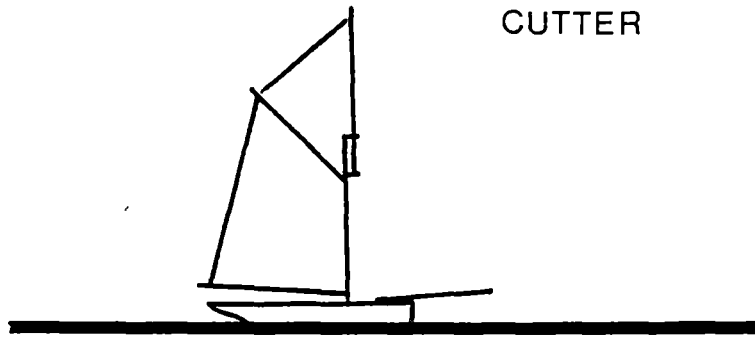
Among their own the Aborigines enjoyed life to the full. At one dance on the island it was apparently difficult to find a room large enough to hold all the people. One Aborigine offered to pull the partition down in his house if guaranteed the expense of re-erecting it in good order again (*Examiner* 1 February 1896). Women were admitted free while men paid 1/- admission, and between £3 and £4 was taken.

THE BOAT BUILDERS

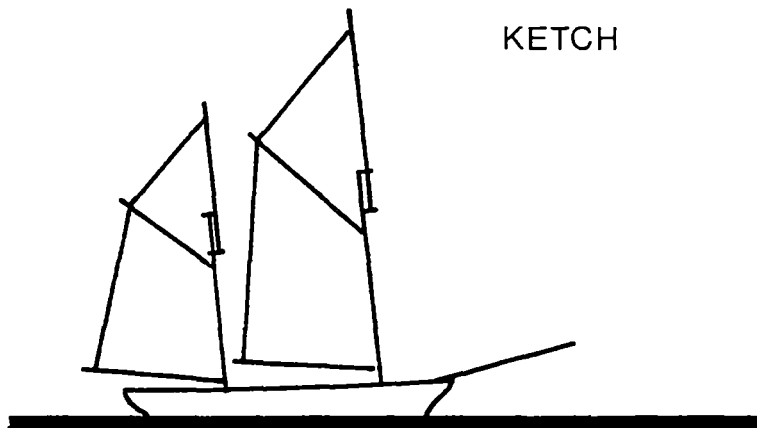
During these times boats were the only means of getting around the islands. According to their accounts, most of the churchmen enjoyed the thrill of sailing with the Islanders from island to island. Montgomery loved being on deck with the crew drenched "by clouds of spray — hit hard by green seas" (*Church News* 1 March 1893: 818). In fact, visits to the islands must have been exciting for the clergy as it took them away to a region vastly different to their parish.

Inter-island services were non-existent so communicating with other people and getting muttonbirds and other produce to markets depended entirely on boats owned by members of the community. The need for boats quickly established a small boat-building industry, with local builders gaining a wide reputation for their product and the inhabitants priding themselves on their boat handling skills (*Examiner* 26, 30 May 1883). Since the last quarter of the eighteenth century sailing vessels have been classified according to their rig. The size of the boat determines the rigging, height and position of the one or more masts. The two main forms of boats employed in the muttonbird trade were the cutter and ketch (Figure 8). A third form, the schooner, was mainly used in the crossing of Bass Strait and not among the shallow and potentially dangerous waters around the Bass Strait islands.

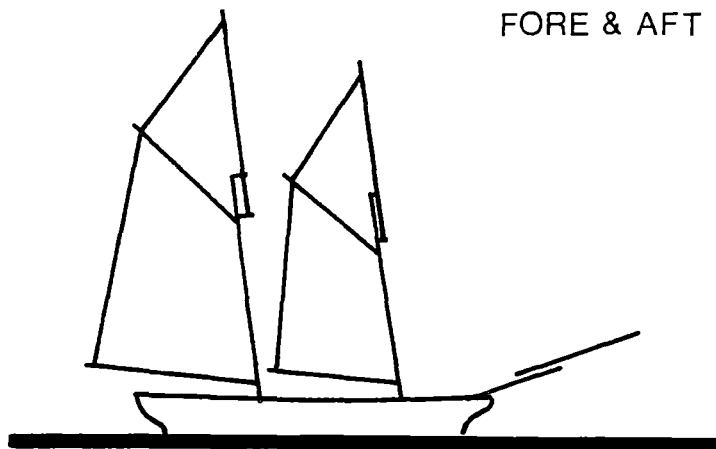
In the early days the boats were small but adequate for sailing as far as Launceston in good weather. Several of the sealers and their children became noted for their maritime skills, James Beedon, a brother of Lucy Beedon, being one of the more gifted. Bishop Nixon called him "our powerful chief boatman" (Nixon 1857: 38), and Marcus Brownrigg found him invaluable during his meanderings among the islands. Others had lost their skills and relied on their past reputation for work as pilots (Nixon 1857: 34).



CUTTER



KETCH



FORE & AFT SCHOONER

Figure 8. Diagrammatic representation of a cutter, ketch and two-mast schooner (after Anonymous 1987: 22-23).

The boats sailed well despite having inferior gear. Brownrigg found that grass was used to tie down sails but that the skills of the people quickly made up for any defects found on the boats. He found them "such excellent boatmen, that no anxiety need be felt, as to their fitness to manage a boat, even under the most perilous circumstances for which human skill could be equal" (Brownrigg 1872: 12). Boat races were common, particularly whenever the boats were heading in the same direction (*Examiner* 4 June 1883).

The period when boat building and local ownership reached its zenith was between the 1870s and early 1900s. During these years a large number of substantial boats were built, owned or captained by local inhabitants to take their produce and that of others to Tasmanian markets, mainly Launceston. Some of the boats and their owners were J. Allen who had the *Summer Cloud*; H. Armstrong *Julia*; T. Barrett *Island Belle*; W. Brown *Nautilus*; J. Burgess *Teazer*; G. Everett *Furneaux*; C. Harley *Shamrock*; J. Holt *Elizabeth*; W. Holt *Rosebud*; T. Mansell *Dream*; H. Maynard *Bella Beaton*; J. Maynard *Emily*; R. Rew *Stormbird* and P. Thomas *Rose*. The boats did not seem to stay in one person's hands for very long, and were often traded among the community. A typical example is the *Shamrock*, built on Cape Barren Island in 1870 and sold by Charles Harley to Thomas Barrett in August 1875 for £50. The sale was executed in the presence of the merchant James Walden in Launceston (Queen Victoria Museum, Launceston, shipping files). By the early 1900s the muttonbird trade was in the hands of shipping companies and merchants in Launceston including Robert Gardner, William Holyman and C. H. Smith and Co. The family-owned boats slowly disappeared as the older generation with nautical skills either retired or died, and shipping companies established a foot-hold in the Furneaux Group.

The Holyman family company was very closely associated with shipping in the Furneaux Group. Born in 1833 in England, William Holyman was the first person to organise regular shipping, first around Tasmania, then to the mainland. He had three sons and together they formed the White Star Line. Based in Devonport until 1900, the Line owned a series of boats that traded between the islands, Launceston, Hobart and other Tasmanian ports, and the Australian mainland. They included the ketches, *Colleen Bawn*, *De Witt*, *Gladys*, *H.J.H.*, *Heather Belle* and *Wave*, and the steamships, *Amy*, *Dorset*, *Star*, *Toroa* and the *Warrentina* (*Examiner* 20 August 1919). The first steamship delivered to the company was the *Star* in 1890. Several of Holyman's boats were shipwrecked around Flinders and Cape Barren Islands (Cooper 1963a: 111; 1963b: 139; 1964: 14).

On the islands one of the best known boat builders was William Brown. Brown was a non-Aboriginal said to have been brought to the islands as a child by John Riddle (Murray-Smith 1979: xxvii). At the time of Brownrigg's fifth visit in 1876 William Brown owned the clipper sailing boat *Island Belle* (Murray-Smith 1979: 121). He probably built it himself; it is certain that three years previously he had built his first cargo boat, the *Ariel*, and prior to that, racing skiffs (*Examiner* 8 April 1873). The *Ariel* was constructed on Cape Barren Island of imported timbers, there being no local timber available on Cape Barren and Flinders Islands of the quality required for a large boat. She was cutter-rigged, 36 feet in overall length, and was built expressly for the Bridport run. In May 1877 a slightly smaller cutter built by Brown, the *Nautilus*, arrived at the Market Wharf in Launceston (*Examiner* 17 May 1877). In 1893 another new boat, the *William Brown*, plied between the islands and Launceston. William Brown's last boat is said to be the *Doris Louise* constructed for Harry Armstrong (West 1984: 67).

The skills of boat-building were widespread throughout the Furneaux Group in both the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. John Maynard constructed a ketch, the *Clytie*, for Mrs Davis of Big Green Island in 1879, and the *Isabel* in 1894 (*Examiner* 16 January 1879; 31 January 1894). George Everett was another Aboriginal boat-builder. The non-Aborigines included Richard Davey who constructed the *Syren* and *Coogee*, James Willett, the manager of Robert Gardner's estates, who built the *Flirt* and *Flinders*, Henry Briant who built the *Una*, and Henry Taylor who built the *Linda*. The time of launching was a great social occasion with the whole community gathered on the beach to watch the activities (Murray-Smith 1979: 156).

Henry Taylor, manager of Robert Gardner's interests on Great Dog Island, built the first (and possibly only) steamer to have been built on the islands, the *Linda*, for Gardner for the Strait islands trade (Plate 6). Construction of the screw steamer began in 1885 on the east side of Great Dog Island (*Examiner* 27 November 1885). The surrounding scrub was cleared and slip rails laid down to the low-tide mark. They can still be found today, usually buried in sand. The *Linda* was launched in May 1887 taking over one year to build. The engine soon gave trouble (*Examiner* 13 June 1887), and six years later it was converted into a sailing boat (*Examiner* 18 January 1895). Later it was reconverted to auxiliary power, and did many trips between Launceston and the islands. It finally sank in the Tamar River during the great 1929 floods (*Examiner* 8 April 1929), but in 1938 was raised and left on the west bank of the river (Cooper 1963b: 141).

In its forty years the *Linda* was one of the stalwarts on the Launceston to Furneaux Group run, although its relatively small length of 72 feet made it very susceptible to bad

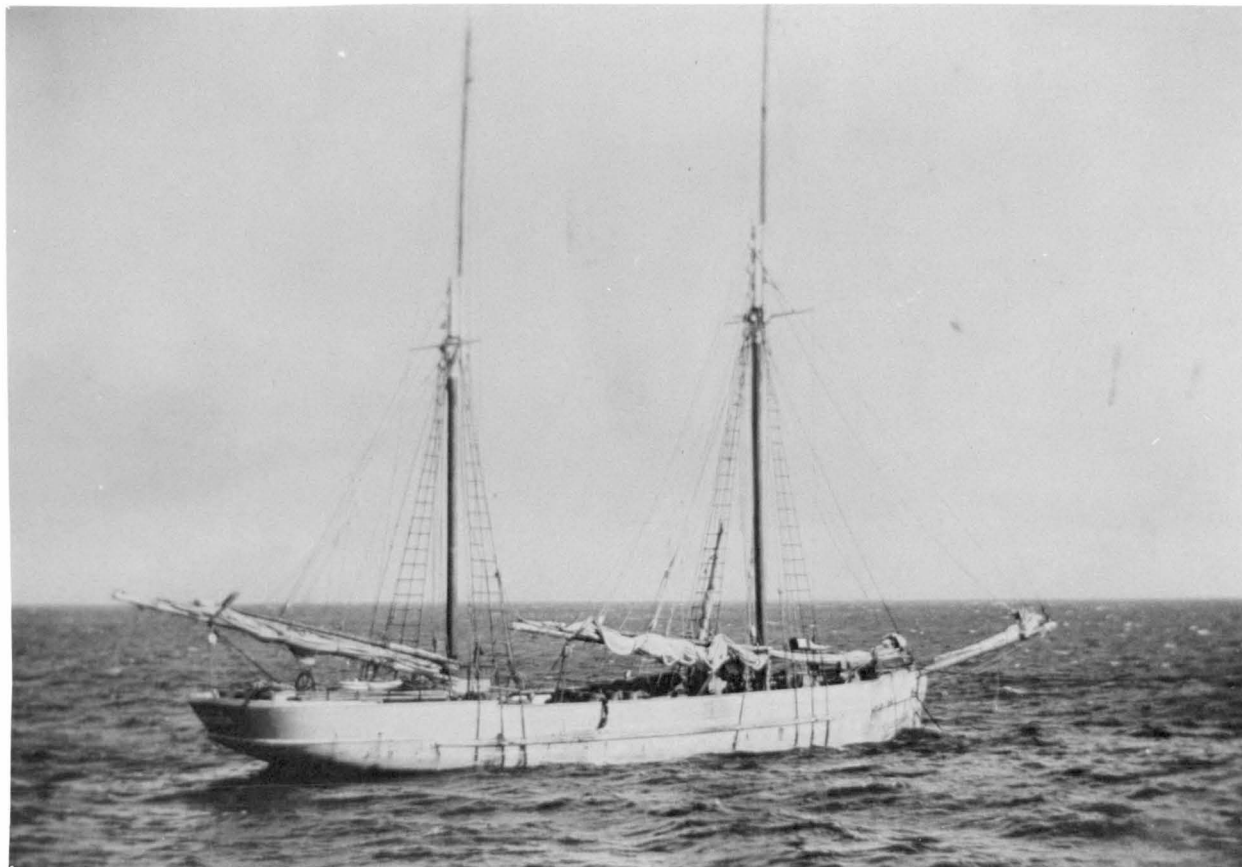


Plate 6. The ketch, Linda. Launched on Great Dog Island in 1887, it traded between Launceston and the Furneaux Group until 1929, when it capsised in the Tamar River at Launceston (Source: Queen Victoria Museum, Launceston).

weather. Often it was storm-bound in the islands for several weeks. Despite its shortcomings the *Linda* and other similar cutters and ketches provided the vital communication link with the outside world before larger steamers, and later, the aeroplane appeared.

When William Brown died in 1911 only one other boat-builder, Thomas Mansell, was still alive. Mansell died in 1925 and with him went the last of the Aboriginal boat building skills. The non-Aboriginal boat builders, Richard Davey and Henry Briant, both died within a few years of Thomas Mansell.

LIVING UNDER THE CAPE BARREN ISLAND RESERVE ACTS OF 1912 and 1945

By 1912, the majority of Aborigines were living on Cape Barren Island whilst most non-Aborigines were on Flinders Island, the majority of the latter having arrived when the development of the island first commenced in 1889. Some of the newcomers had little time for the Aborigines, holding to the belief that "they should not be spoon fed". According to them "the future of the Group lay with the white population more than with the half-castes" (*Examiner* 13 January 1911). This racist attitude did nothing to lift the morale of the Aborigines who had very little money to better their lives. The Cape Barren Island Reserve Act, 1912 was an attempt to make the Reserve productive, so that the Aborigines could have a reasonable standard of life.

Initially there were attempts on both sides to make the Act work, although it was doomed to failure. The majority of men on Cape Barren Island were either hunters or labourers, not agriculturalists. Their right to choose to work or not work could not be controlled by an Act of Parliament which attempted to force them into a rigid way of life constantly requiring new injections of capital for its economic viability. In fact, the lack of money to pay bills was the undoing of most of the people who entered into the scheme. The muttonbird season remained the most important source of cash for the people and the conditions imposed by the government put extra financial burdens upon them which they could not meet. For example, in 1922, the amount advanced to the Aborigines was £809 of which £266 had been repaid, while £205 was in arrears (TPP 1922. Number 24: 3). Many of the Aborigines were also in debt to store keepers such as Mrs Archer who, with her daughters, ran the store and post office at The Corner (Mabel Archer interview), and to others, including Thomas Barrett on Long Island and Alex Ross on Vansittart Island. They paid their debts off with money received from selling muttonbirds and, having done that, had very little or no money left to pay off their government loans or buy the daily

necessities for living. On Cape Barren Island the schoolteacher was the crown land bailiff, aided from 1918 by the policeman. Until 1924 the policeman for the Furneaux Group was stationed at The Corner. On the death of Constable Archer, the post was transferred to Flinders Island which had a larger population than Cape Barren Island and had by then become the administrative centre for the Furneaux Group.

Aborigines had been living on the Reserve for many years prior to the Act. The Act therefore was an attempt by the government to legitimise and provide security over land occupation, by granting them land they could own once certain conditions were satisfied. This created many problems. For example, the muttonbird season interfered. People who went muttonbirding forgot to apply for the block they were occupying, which allowed other persons to apply for the same block. Furthermore, there was always the chance of somebody illegally taking or 'jumping' another person's block in their absence (AOT LSD 187/2/98AB). Usually the matter was resolved by allowing the original occupier to remain, and finding a vacant block for the applicant. There were also frequent complaints about the blocks. Some had no water, others were mostly rock or too far away from the school. Occasionally the remoteness was used as a lever to get applications approved. In one example, the applicant's agricultural block was one mile distance from the homestead block. He requested permission to reside on his agricultural block instead of the homestead block because of the distance involved, and because "I will be away from the crowd and will do more work" (AOT LSD 188/24HB). The application was deemed a very reasonable request by the crown land bailiff, and was successful. In such instances a house could be moved once permission was granted, but the water tanks and fences had to remain (AOT LSD 188/6HB).

Several houses were built under the scheme. One house constructed of timber and corrugated iron measured 24 by 24 ft (7.3 m) with 10 ft (3 m) high walls (AOT LSD 188/39HB). It had four rooms and contained five doors, four windows and two chimneys. Two rooms measured 9 ft 6 in (2.9 m) by 10 ft 6 in (3.2 m) and the other two, 11 ft 6 in (3.5 m) by 13 ft 6 in (4.1 m). This home stood out among the hovels occupied by the majority of the Aborigines, which were generally two-roomed, small, paling huts, many with wooden chimneys and grass floors. Very few had toilets, most residents using the bush.

The generally low standard living conditions and the relaxed lifestyle of Aborigines on the Reserve prompted the crown land bailiff in July 1928 to write to the Secretary for Lands:

The Reserve at present is fast becoming a wilderness of scrub and tangled wire, grey hound looking cattle, and a hoard of half-caste men, women and children, walking about from shack to shack day in and out from year to year and no ambition for the present or future. They remind me of a flock of sheep on a rock in the middle of the sea (AOT LSD 188/76HB).

Several years previously the crown land bailiff had recommended that the Aborigines pay rates and that whites be allowed to claim blocks. The presence of white people would be an incentive for the Aborigines to work harder, something which was "particularly noticeable in the muttonbird rookeries" (AOT LSD 187/27AB). Furthermore, the Aborigines could grow potatoes and peas for market, and even put in pine plantations. On 5 May 1922 Captain Bladon wrote to the Premier that radiata pine *Pinus insignis* (*radiata*) should be planted by schoolchildren and youths up to eighteen years of age under the direction of their teacher (RS 40/1). In 25 years they would get £500 per acre or 100,000 feet of timber per acre. The "community would then be in an independent position to work out its own salvation". The government and the Aborigines did not avail themselves of this opportunity and this is probably fortunate, because caring for plantations takes skill and funds, neither of which were available to the Aborigines.

Not all comments were disparaging of the Aborigines. Against all assumptions, the Aborigines did know what they wanted, and that did not include domination by non-Aborigines. According to Frank Jackson, who came to Flinders Island about the turn of the century and prospered in farming and shipping, the Aborigines were clean and honest, but only had time for the few Europeans they felt they could trust (LL MS 11803 Box 2152/5, Jackson to Cottam, 17 August 1944). Living off their own wits they were skilled at improvisation, and "could turn their hands to anything". How they actually lived though was a question that seems to have perplexed everybody. The jobs they found required no skills and were sometimes off the island:

Mostly I used to go away, there wasn't much work on here but worked on Flinders. Sometimes all scrubbing. You had to take slasher and an axe and something, what you don't do now. Its all different. Go out there, and work for months and months on scrubbing (Darcy Maynard interview).

Darcy Maynard was one of the many Aborigines who had to find work elsewhere, but who always returned to Cape Barren Island despite the lack of unemployment. In 1993 he was the oldest person residing on the island (Plate 5).

Slowly, the government came to recognise that the Cape Barren Island Reserve Act, 1912 was not functioning. In 1924 a Select Committee was asked to report upon the best means of dealing with the "half-caste problem". The Committee had little time to fully investigate matters, and in its one and a half page report offered what it called "practical recommendations" aimed at rectifying some of the obvious shortcomings (TPP 1924. Number 48: 3): a full solution to the problem would have meant the expenditure of large sums of money, something the government was not prepared to do, as the Select Committee well realised. Its list of nine recommendations included appointing an assistant crown land bailiff, enforcing the penalty provisions of the Act, compelling lessees to maintain fences and cease sub-letting, and teaching schoolchildren practical subjects. These suggestions achieved practically nothing as the Aborigines continued to live as they had in the past. But the Committee did recognise the importance of muttonbirding to the community and recommended that no additional muttonbird licences be issued except to Aborigines, particularly for Chappell and Babel Islands, the two main rookeries available to Aborigines (the other rookeries were either privately owned or leased to non-Aborigines).

Few changes occurred in the next 20 or so years. In 1929 a lawyer from the Attorney's General Department, A. W. Burbury, was asked to investigate the state of the Aborigines. Burbury's report was candid and sympathetic to the people (AOT CSD 22/336/104[35/29]). He estimated that, from about 200 people on the Reserve, about £2,000 in total income was earned each year, of which half came from muttonbirding, and the rest from invalid servicemen's and old-age pension cheques, and from miscellaneous minor work. As this money was all the Aborigines had, how they existed was a mystery to him, though he noted that they lived on salted muttonbirds much of the year. Living standards were dismal. Of about 24 houses, half were mere shacks of two rooms. Many of the children were suffering from sickness, including malnutrition. Individually, Burbury found them exemplary in conduct and manners, but as a race, "idolent [*sic*], improvident, excitable, unreliable and incapable of sustained effort". He commented:

Heredity, environment and loss of self respect are some of the reasons for their lamentable condition. They have an inferiority complex deeply ingrained and they hate the whites, regarding themselves as having been

supplanted and exploited by white men. They say that the whites took away their land and are now taking their kangaroos and mutton-birds. But, they will not use the land which has been set aside for them, and they are selling their rights in their mutton-birding leases to the white man. That they have been exploited in the past is, unfortunately, true. Now, however, they are wary and have become exploiters themselves (AOT CSD 22/336/104/35/29).

Burbury's recommendations were that the Commonwealth should take over the running of the Reserve if the State could not afford it, and that all of Cape Barren Island should be acquired because the present small size of the Reserve militated against it being agriculturally viable. He also advocated the setting up of a mission, the planting of a commercial pine plantation, the holding of an inquiry into the muttonbird industry (particularly into the processing of the birds because, at this time, birds produced were of a notoriously poor quality), and that children be encouraged to leave the island once they had finished school so that they were not exposed to the bad influences of their parents.

Burbury's major recommendations were not followed and the government continued to discharge its obligations under the Act without too much expenditure of money. It did ask the Australian Board of Missions for its advice in 1930, and the Board responded by saying that there was no scope for its participation under the current policy (AOT LSD 51[2]). The chairman of the Board, J. S. Needham, recommended that the present policy of segregation be changed to one of dispersal and absorption into the general community (*Australian Board of Mission Review* 15 January 1931: 171). The Aborigines were unlikely to be successful landowners Needham argued, and the new policy could be achieved by turning the 'half-castes' into whites and taking them off the Reserve.

Another report by a senior bureaucrat, Dr Gaha, in June 1930, recommended moving the children away from their parents, a common government policy all over Australia at the time. Gaha also advocated abandoning the Reserve and assimilating the people into the general community, although he recognised that the "...solution is far from simple, if not altogether insoluble" (AOT LSD 51[1]).

Several worthwhile improvements did occur. A radio was installed in 1937 and a nurse appointed who also stood in as a welfare officer. Bush nurses were also stationed on Babel Island from 1937 and on Mount Chappell Island from 1939 during the muttonbird season. The money for these came from the Fund, to which £500 was appropriated

annually by Parliament (AOT LSD 251/135, 137, 139, 140). The doctor from Flinders Island called every three months or when required at government expense. The cost of these visits was quite high and the Minister for Health suggested in 1940 that the residents should pay for their stay in the hospital (AOT 51[5]). The Minister for Lands, whose department was administering the Reserve, responded:

...where the people were treated by former Governments in such a terrible manner, I think it should be made clear, and I do not mind by which Department, that all medical treatment should be free as well as maintenance in the hospital for these poor people (AOT LSD 51[6]).

This was the same Minister for Lands, Thomas Davies, who suggested at a Flinders Island Council meeting that the people of Lady Barron "should take more interest in these people [Aborigines], especially the schoolchildren" (FIC Minutes, 27 April 1944). The reaction to this comment is unrecorded. It was now official government policy to deny that Aborigines (the government meant tribal-born Aborigines) still existed in Tasmania (AOT LSD 51[15]), although the government clearly felt it had an obligation to their descendants.

A Miss Hudson from Hobart established the Bethel Mission to teach residents useful household skills such as "domestic science, sewing, cooking, hygiene and similar accomplishments" (TPP 1938. Number 13: 2). She was a difficult person to deal with and failed to establish rapport with the inhabitants, the children in particular teasing her:

- I remember some of the boys, we'd go up there after school and she'd make us pray, so we'd be bended down, our heads bended down, we'd be praying. Some of the boys would have a handful of pebbles and as she's praying, they'd be like marbles, they'd be going along the floor to her, and I'd be saying to the boys, you mustn't do that, she's praying. Next thing, she'd put her head up: "You mustn't do that, God doesn't like that" (Rachel Quillerat interview).

Carl Jensen, a Launceston-based evangelist, visited annually for seven consecutive years during the 1930s. In December 1940 he applied to the school-headmaster "to do a little gospel work among the residents", but was fobbed off by the government which thought that the presence of the Bethel Mission and the Church of England was sufficient to win souls, for "too many views put before the people lead only to confusion" (AOT LSD 51[7, 8, 9]). It also appears that he did not receive a good reception from the inhabitants

during his last few visits, which may have been the real reason why he was refused entry.

The 1930s are said to have been good times on Cape Barren Island (Ryan 1981: 247). In 1939 45 men received the dole. These men had occasional work repairing Council roads and seasonal work such as shearing and harvesting crops. The money came from the Fund, from which £200 was appropriated in 1939 for unemployment relief work. The extra money would have been a boon to the Aborigines who on average made only £32 per family from muttonbirding (AOT LSD 51[14]). Most of this went to the Cape Barren Island storekeeper who in 1941 had cash purchases made from him for £2,539. The debts, he said, were only £59 (AOT LSD 51[10]).

Entertainment flourished when a hall was constructed in 1936 which provided a venue for dances and meetings. Sports and horse races were held on the airstrip paddock:

Then after Christmas we'd have on Boxing Day, they'd all train their horses, have races. Auntie Claudie, she was a dressmaker she made the silks for the men for the jockeys. We had a ladies bracelet and a little cup and we'd go out and we'd watch them run and Uncle Cliff Everett, he used to get the cordial, the little booth they called it. Everybody would buy the drinks and lollies from them. They'd take their cut lunches and we would have a whole day. We would come home, we would have our tea, have a bath or whatever and then we would get dressed up in our fineries, our evening gowns and whatever. We had long ball dresses we call them, and done up with our hair, and our fancy shoes, our high heeled shoes. We'd go into the hall and have our dance that night. There would be a presentation of the lady's bracelet to the winning horse and there would be the cup. We would have our dance to one or two o'clock (Marge Mansell interview).

The Aborigines had a talent for music and many of them could play a large variety of instruments. Little bands could be formed instantaneously, particularly on a Saturday night on a muttonbird island:

We had the Brown family, they could play from the violin down to the guitar, accordion and that, and we'd have a concert (Furley Gardner interview).

The Aborigines loved dancing and music, but never developed a unique style of music perhaps because they were not resident long enough on Cape Barren Island to do so. They adopted and copied parts of country and western, folk and Louisiana Cajun music, to evolve an unsophisticated mixture of these styles.

The Second World War did not seem to affect the running of the Reserve. Entry permits were denied to 'undesirable' Aborigines and liquor continued to be a problem to the authorities. Rationing resulted in a temporary shortage of tobacco but was soon rectified (TPP 1942. Number 15: 2; AOT LSD 51[11]). A number of the younger men left the Reserve and were found employment by the man-power authorities (TPP 1943. Number 17: 3), which were set up under the National Security Act, 1939 because of the Second World War. The Act allowed the Commonwealth government to direct people to accept employment wherever they were needed. Another 43 (including children) found employment in the Derwent Valley picking fruit and hops, and working in factories (AOT LSD 51[12]; *Examiner* 7 October 1941). But those who remained faced poverty. In 1942-43 a total of £476 was paid out in unemployment relief in the whole of the state of Tasmania, and of this, £273/10/- went to Cape Barren Island (TPP 1942-43. Number 30: 1). By the end of March 1943 the government was pleased to state that the need for unemployment relief in Tasmania had ceased.

On Cape Barren and Flinders Islands several Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal families scratched out a living from tin mining that first commenced in the early twentieth century. At Rookes River on Cape Barren Island, the Saintys were one such family. Life for the children seems to have been happy:

We had a few fruit trees and that around. We had a big pine that was still there. The house is not there any more. And when I stood up where our old homestead was and there was a room outside where my brothers used to sleep, and I walked down on the beach where Dad had the vegie garden and where we used to go down and take the boys swimming and that. I stood there and cried because it brought back a lot of memories for me surviving there as a child (Rachel Quillerat interview).

In some ways, life for one family, the Saintys was made more difficult by the restrictions imposed by government regulations on movement in the Reserve by non-Aborigines. Because their father was non-Aboriginal, visits to The Corner for supplies had to be made during daylight hours because of the perceived problems of liquor trading if non-Aborigines were allowed to remain after dark.

After the Second World War some of the Aboriginal muttonbirders bought miners' rights for tin which, in 1948, cost them 5/- (AOT POL 720/1). The mining was spasmodic because of the frequent lack of water, which meant that mines closed down, and often men were put off work temporarily, waiting for rain to fill up the creeks or dams. To overcome the problem at Hardluck Creek, a long water race was constructed (Hardluck Creek and Rookes River were the two main locations of tin mining on Cape Barren Island):

Got a lot in Rookes River, got a fair amount at Hardluck. Water was a great thing, there'd be a shortage of water always. Very dry in summer (Bill Riddle interview).

The race is visible today although overgrown by scrub. Apart from mining on the two main islands, exploratory holes were dug on Babel Island by William Grey Holloway of Lady Barron on Flinders Island in the 1920s (AOT AA 612/21/1). Holloway was one of three brothers (Henry Joseph and Henry Russell were the other two) who owned 100 acres of land around North Point on Babel Island and formed the Babel Island Tin Syndicate. Nothing was found, and the company was forced by the local policeman, George Fisher, to fill in the holes for safety reasons and to prevent muttonbirds being trapped in them.

During the life of the 1945 Act, efforts were made to improve the lot of the Aborigines. Instructions were given in agriculture, there was some contract work, vegetable seeds together with ten fowls and two good cows with calves were purchased, and school lunches were provided from March 1949 to December 1953 under the auspices of the Department of Education. A football club and progress association were formed while regular dances and fancy dress balls were held (TPP 1949. Number 38: 4). These dances, sports days and other social activities are still fondly remembered by older Cape Barren Islanders:

I can remember the first time I got up on that floor, summertime. I've never seen it done away like but it's a type of square dancing but we called it the sets. This young chap come and got me up and I just shook so much I went weak in the legs. That's the final time I ever got up on the floor and it looked so huge, I thought how am I ever going to get to the other end...I can't remember how often the dances were but when they were on it was like a grand opening, you know...I can remember as a teenager you'd have your eye on the boys and the boys would say hullo

to you, but as far as putting arms around you, that wasn't on [laughs]
(Furley Gardner interview).

In 1950 the government gave up its legislative efforts to help the Aborigines. It still maintained that there were no Aborigines in Tasmania, only their descendants. In a letter to the Secretary of the Victorian Aboriginal Group, the Premier, Robert Cosgrove, wrote on 10 December 1947:

In reply to your letters of the 5th and 6th December, I desire to inform you that there are no aborigines in this state, the last of the Tasmanian native population having died some 70 years ago (AOT PCS 1/18/183/17/47).

The attitude represented by this letter had persisted ever since Truganini died in 1876. Yet, in 1929 Burbury had asked why the 1912 Act had been passed if the Cape Barren Islanders were not deemed worthy of some special status or special claim on State help (AOT CSD 22/336/104/35/29). The Aborigines themselves continued to believe that they had a claim on the State, a claim that they still pursue vigorously (Jones 1992: 58; Pybus 1991).

The Yacca Gum Industry

In their quest for income outside the muttonbird season, many Aborigines turned to the unusual industry of harvesting the stem of grass trees *Xanthorrhoea australis*, a member of the lily family, for resin (yacca gum). The stem was crushed and the gum extracted through a heating process, the end product being used in varnishes, paints, as a sealing agent and in French polish.

The possibility that grass trees could be of monetary value, apart from being used as fuel for domestic purposes or even as fuel in steamers (*Church News* 3 October 1899: 1123), was first realised in the latter part of the nineteenth century (TPP 1894-95. Number 39: 11). One visitor to the islands in the 1880s had remarked that resin from grass trees could be used for sealing wax and in French polish (*Examiner* 4 June 1883). In 1894 the residents of Cape Barren Island gathered 30 to 40 tons for shipment to Launceston (*Examiner* 23 October 1894). These shipments were probably consigned to James Walden, the Launceston merchant who was involved extensively in tanning, farming and the purchase and sale of animal skins. In 1893 he exported one shipment of ten tons to London where it was made into liquid gum (*Examiner* 7 October 1893). Small amounts

were periodically sent to mainland Tasmania but they only sold slowly, even at very low prices (*Examiner* 24 September 1896). The potential to expand was recognised but never taken up as the price fluctuated considerably, from as high as £5 to as low as £1/10/- per ton. The hard work required to gather the gum must have sometimes seemed to the Aborigines not worth the effort at the low prices offered.

But there was an occasional demand, which the Aborigines on Cape Barren Island took up because it meant money in their pockets for the next muttonbird season (CBI School Visitors Journal, 24 January 1921). However, it was only when C. H. Smith and Co. formed Island Stores at Lady Barron in 1939 that a serious attempt to exploit grass trees began. In the mid-1950s the industry passed to another C. H. Smith and Co. subsidiary, Sea Packing Co. (see Chapter 10), whose letterhead was embossed with the words "Sea Pack, Fish, Mutton Birds, Yacca Gum".

Grass trees were abundant over thousands of hectares on the heath lands of Cape Barren Island. Frequent fires caused much damage to the vegetation although it was stated that it was necessary to fire the grass trees to obtain the gum (AOT LSD 51[3]), probably because burning the leaves allowed easier access to the stem. Although the yacca gum was easy to extract, a large number of grass trees had to be collected in order to obtain small amounts of gum. Because of this, it was hard work getting the large amount of grass trees to the wharf at The Corner. Initially the stems were crushed on Cape Barren Island, but because of frequent machinery failures, the crusher was installed at Lady Barron on Flinders Island in 1955. The gum was refined outside Tasmania.

The auxiliary ketch *Shearwater* was one of the ships that picked up as many as 341 bags of gum weighing 22 tons a shipment, from around Cape Barren Island, and landed them either in Launceston or Hobart (Francis Rhodes, *Shearwater* Log, 4 June 1949; 6 April, 4 October, 4 December 1950; 12 April 1951). In December 1955 Sea Packing Co. shipped from Flinders Island to mainland Tasmania, via the auxiliary ketch *Naracoopa*, 265 bags of coarse and fine yacca gum weighing 922 pounds which then was exported to France (C. H. Smith and Co. files, 16 December 1955; 11 June 1956).

Most of the gum coming from Cape Barren Island was first crushed at Lady Barron. Occasionally, the plant was hired out at £4 per crushed ton to people who collected their own grass trees. However, the industry was always encountering problems. The crushing plant constantly broke down; stones apparently damaged the machinery. Crushing also depended on fine weather as the gum had to be dry. The work was filthy and it was almost impossible to get anyone to work the machinery. There was even a

suggestion of importing labour and paying a higher wage (C. H. Smith and Co. files, Williamson to Cruse, 25 October 1955). The exhortation by Jack Cruse, the director of Sea Packing Co., to his manager at Lady Barron, Tom Langley, to "get all you can from Cape Barren, so that the wheels of industry will keep turning", failed to prevent Sea Packing Co. from going bankrupt in 1957 (C. H. Smith and Co. files, Cruse to Langley, 2 December 1955). The amount of gum being sold was small, and together with the trouble of constantly repairing the machinery, the company lost whatever market there was.

Returns to the Aborigines must have been very meagre as none called it their second main source of income after muttonbirding. When the plant was working on Cape Barren Island it would have been worthwhile to collect the gum. However, when it was moved to Lady Barron, the added costs of freight would have given less incentive to maintain supplies. Even an advertisement placed by Tom Langley failed to excite interest, despite its generous offer:

If you are interested in making big money Island Stores can help — We are now buyers of yacca gum. Our price is 6 pounds per ton and we will supply the bags — We are prepared to let big contracts to genuine gum cutters — (*Island News* 2 September 1955).

At the end of November 1956 the Department of Social Security was asked to investigate the needs of Aborigines living on Cape Barren Island resulting from unemployment, poor muttonbird seasons and lapse of the yacca gum industry (*Island News* 23 November 1956).

THE LAST FORTY YEARS

Protection to Assimilation

On expiry of the Cape Barren Island Reserve Act, 1945 the government's policy of protectionism towards Aborigines changed to one of assimilation. It sought to be rid of the Cape Barren Island problem by moving the inhabitants to mainland Tasmania or Flinders Island and absorbing them into the wider community. In September 1959 Mr Hill from the Tasmanian Department of Social Services visited and interviewed most of the Aborigines to ascertain whether they would be willing to leave should homes and work be available elsewhere (CBI School Visitors Journal, 15 September 1959). A

social welfare officer was sent over in 1965 to assist the people in finding homes off Cape Barren Island.

However, the assimilation policy was initially denied by the government. As late as 1968 the Minister responsible for re-settlement, the Chief Secretary, Brian Miller, said "...the interests of the Bass Strait Islanders must be preserved" (*Examiner* 12 July 1968). Nevertheless, when he visited Cape Barren Island in October 1968 in company with the Minister for Agriculture, Alexander Atkins, and a member of the Legislative Council, Eric McKay, he repeated the government's offer of relocation assistance. The offer was "particularly applicable to young married couples and to other young people who had left school" (CBI School Visitors Journal, October 1968). It evoked little response. A letter to the *Examiner*, signed by six of the inhabitants, had earlier expressed their stand against assimilation, stating: "...the government put us here. It is our home. We are happy, and all we ask is that work be made available on the island" (*Examiner* 29 August 1968). A parliamentary committee reported in 1968 that between 5,000 to 10,000 acres on the northern side of the island had potential for development (TPP 1968. Number 15: 27). It recommended that every effort be made to encourage development on the island, and that is where the matter stood.

In 1969 the then Liberal Party Premier, Angus Bethune, said that in his personal opinion the best long-term solution was assimilation (*Mercury* 12 July 1969; *Examiner* 10 June 1969). Officially, though, the government continued to maintain that it was not trying to transplant Cape Barren Islanders to the mainland. If the Aborigines wanted to come over they would be assisted but a real problem existed in finding them employment (*Examiner* 1 June 1971) — the government did very little about that, too.

In early 1970 the state government advertised for a resettlement adviser to be based in Launceston "to advise and encourage families on Cape Barren Island to re-settle on the Tasmanian Mainland in housing provided by Commonwealth funds and to assist such families generally with their social welfare" (*Tasmanian Government Gazette* 8 April 1970: 764). The position description specified a mature person with a background in social work and preferably with academic qualifications. At that time no Aborigine in Tasmania could meet that standard so the job had to go to a non-Aborigine, in contrast with the situation from the early 1980s where the majority of jobs dealing with Aborigines have gone to members of the Aboriginal community.

Aboriginality Asserted

The resettlement was not a success. Helped by concerned outsiders, the Aborigines on Cape Barren Island began to find their voice. Abschol (an organisation formed in 1953 on university campuses to assist Aborigines in higher education) became involved in 1969 (*Examiner* 17 September 1969; *Togatus* May 1970: 13-15). Abschol restricted itself generally to a political lobbying role, but made small amounts of funds available to clean up the cemetery and small park area on Cape Barren Island. It sought to engender public awareness of the existence of the Cape Barren Island situation from an Aboriginal point of view. Over the years the island community had continually attracted adverse comment, against which it sought to defend itself in the press (*Examiner* 15, 17, 21, 25, 27, 28 November 1947; 29 August 1968; 3, 11, 17 September 1968). A series of six articles in the *Mercury* upset the community (*Mercury* 17, 19, 21, 22, 23, 26 August 1968). These articles alleged that the Aborigines were lazy, constantly drunk on cheap sweet wine, were ignorant, apathetic and lived off social services, allegations that were dismissed as biased and untrue by the Aborigines (CBI School Visitors Journal, August 1968).

Abschol sponsored the first Tasmanian State Aboriginal Conference in Launceston in 1971, concentrating particularly on the claim for self determination and involvement in all decisions concerning them. The state government refused to aid the conference although the Commonwealth provided some funds and observers (Anonymous 1982: 513). The principal outcome was the identification of some 2,000 Tasmanians as Aborigines who wished to preserve their cultural heritage. It had hitherto been very difficult for them to be regarded as 'real' Aborigines. When \$25,000 was appropriated for Aboriginal housing in Tasmania in 1968, even Commonwealth officials said the people were not Aborigines, though aid for them came within the scope of the fund (*Examiner* 23 August 1968). When the referendum in 1967 gave tribal-born Aborigines the vote and placed them on the census roll, the Commonwealth government accepted its responsibility for improving the welfare of Australian Aborigines.

Accepting that Aborigines did exist in Tasmania, the Commonwealth government steadily increased the amount of money for Aboriginal housing and aided through Abschol the establishment in 1972 of an Aboriginal Information Centre in Hobart. With the Aborigines themselves now organised and in a position to lead their own struggles, Abschol was dissolved that year. In 1977 the Information Centre was renamed as the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre with branches in Hobart, Launceston, Burnie and Devonport (TPP 1978. Number 94: 30). Independent Aboriginal centres were also

established on Flinders and Cape Barren Islands (*Aboriginal Newsletter* March 1987: 2). Each centre is self-governing and autonomous from the others, and offers assistance for local inhabitants.

In the early 1970s there was some disquiet from Aborigines on mainland Tasmania that Cape Barren Island was obtaining most of the Commonwealth funds. From 1975 this changed as money was allocated in proportion to where the people lived (Anonymous 1982: 517). In the 1980s the population of Cape Barren Island hovered around 40 as many people left to find work and live elsewhere. The happy memories that expatriates had of their childhood or early married days have not changed, although the island has come to be seen as a 'backwater' of Tasmania:

Oh, there's no life there for one thing, why we used to make our own fun when we was there. Now there's nothing, there's no life there whatsoever. I just don't know how people can live on the island. Well I was bred and born there. No way would I go back there and live, oh, it's nice to go there for a holiday but to go there and live, no way now. Even Flinders itself has gone back. I remember when we lived on Flinders there it was good. We used to go to dances. Well when we'd walk out of the hall it'd be daylight! (Ruth Maynard interview).

Several million dollars are now spent each year on services for Aborigines in Tasmania, with tertiary institutions also offering social services for Aboriginal students. One of the greatest changes has been in education, with at least two Aborigines graduating from the University of Tasmania Law School, and the establishment in 1986 of 'Riawunna', the Centre for Aboriginal Education, on the Hobart and Launceston campuses of the University of Tasmania. One of the important roles of the Centre is to provide bridging courses for Aborigines to increase their participation rates in tertiary education.

Alcohol remains the perennial problem (Sculthorpe 1980: 2; Anonymous 1982: 518), though it is said that, because the Aborigines are a minority group and are therefore more visible compared to alcoholic whites, the extent of the problem may be exaggerated (Anonymous 1982: 519). Its existence is nevertheless recognised by the Aboriginal community and unsuccessful attempts have been made to deal with it. The sadness it causes in many homes is vividly portrayed in part of a letter found by a resident on the Cape Barren Island rubbish dump, dated 12 November 1987:

Not much news from here, same old story, Walker [brand of whisky] in the morning, Walker in the afternoon. They are all into the amber liquid, down yonder...

Unemployment is also a major problem. It averages 50 percent and varies greatly because most of the work is seasonal (such as muttonbirding and fishing). Various training schemes have been developed by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Training to provide long term employment opportunities.

The other problem still present is racial discrimination, described as widespread, insidious and long-standing (Anonymous 1982: 523; *Mercury* 4 February 1991):

It was after I grew up and left then and went down to Lady Barron, that my sister-in-law said to me one day when I was walking up the street. I took the cardigan off because it was hot and she said, you can't get going up walking up the street, they'll see your brown arms. And I thought to myself, well, I've never come across this before and even though she had an Aboriginal father, to them they didn't have nothing to do with them (Rachel Quillerat interview).

Aborigines and the Law

The policemen appointed in the 1890s and early 1900s had a difficult task, because their precinct included the whole of the Furneaux Group. In 1900 Constable Urquhart was appointed to Cape Barren Island, the fourth since Smith, Napper and Riddle. Archer took over from Urquhart in 1904, and when he died in 1924, the position was transferred to Lady Barron which had become an important fishing port and seafood processing centre. A new police station had been built at Whitemark in 1911 and a boat supplied (TPP 1912. Number 39: 5). These policemen had a wide range of duties to perform which increased when the Cape Barren Island Reserve Act, 1912 was enacted. The main problems that they had to cope with appear to have stemmed from unemployment, alcohol and their effects.

Aborigines were constantly in debit and managed to repay debts only with the proceeds from muttonbirding (TPP 1908. Number 57: 10). The lack of any fulfilling employment resulted in some Aborigines getting into trouble with the police (AOT POL 722/1). Charges were usually minor, ranging from being drunk and disorderly, drunk and incapable, using indecent and blasphemous language, disturbing the public peace,

vagrancy, to using threatening language. The police were also called to adjudicate internal disputes among the Aborigines, so indecent language could include one Aborigine calling another "bastard, skinny legs, long legs and fat belly" (AOT POL 203/1[2]). Vagrancy was a charge frequently used to gaol Aborigines who were a nuisance. Some of the more destitute, principally on Cape Barren Island, existed on charity from relatives and friends. According to bail records, no Aborigine, in contrast to non-Aborigines, was ever charged with drunken driving (AOT POL 722/1-8). There appears to have been no malice intended by most of the offenders, but once after a football match, just "...to let off steam...some of them had some fun with the police" (as the Flinders Island Council Clerk wrote in 1952: AOT POL 203/1[1]).

Many of the offences occurred at Whitemark, which at that time had the only hotel on Flinders Island, the 'Interstate':

At the Whitemark pub there those days they couldn't drink at their ordinary counter as an ordinary person. Special end of the counter. They'd mix up some sort of red muck and they used to sell them at full prices there, you'd kill a dog. But the people that did those things they're all dead now, and somebody else is paying the price, isn't it? (Herbie Nicholls interview).

To a person first arriving on Flinders Island and encountering the racial tension between Aborigines and non-Aborigines, the visual impact of the interior of the Interstate Hotel soon after the Second World War was stunning:

I arrived and walked down this long passage to the back, half full of blood and old wall paper. Not a very pleasant sight and was amazed when I arrived into the hotel proper part, the bar, that across the bar, from the top of the bar to the ceiling was pig wire which was quite so. I was taken back, I just looked and within a minute some big hefty fisherman, or somebody arrived up, "Do you want to make something of it mate"? "Good gawd" I said, "I'm only just looking". And that was my first impression of the island (Tom Langley interview).

Among both Aborigines and non-Aborigines, there were habitual offenders. One Aborigine committed at least 33 offences on Cape Barren and Flinders Islands in 20 years (AOT POL 208/1). He was sent down for a total of 33 months in Risdon Gaol at Hobart and, over the years, fined approximately £84 for offences such as being drunk

and incapable, bad language, fighting, resisting arrest, assaulting a police officer, vagrancy, injury to property and stealing. Later in his life, being committed to imprisonment became routine, even for minor offences. On one occasion he was gaoled for three months for stealing several tins of food from the Interstate Hotel, and one month for the additional charge of vagrancy. Another Aborigine committed at least 17 offences in 8 years, and was sentenced to periods totalling 29 months in gaol (AOT POL 208/1, 208/2). Gaoling did not reform them as they committed crimes almost as soon as they returned home. However, the wives and families of such men may have been better off financially with their husbands in gaol, because after six months the women were entitled to a Commonwealth Widow's Pension worth about £7 in the mid-1950s (AOT POL 203/1[3]).

Overall, similar numbers of Aborigines and non-Aborigines were brought before the Whitemark Court, although the disproportion in population size was approximately 1:4. In the 9 years from 14 January 1952 to 11 March 1961, 35 Aborigines were charged compared to 58 non-Aborigines. The amount of bail depended on the gravity of the charge and varied from £2 to £10, with drunken driving drawing the heaviest bail of £10. From 11 March 1961 to 17 August 1963, 11 Aborigines and 13 non-Aborigines were given bail (AOT POL 722/8). Again, among both groups habitual offenders committed the majority of offences.

In 1917 what seems to have been a case of a 'death in police custody' occurred on Flinders Island (AOT POL 205/1). James Collings, a non-Aboriginal, was found drunk, lying on the side of the road between Whitemark and Emta with a badly gashed hand. It was thought that he had cut his hand when he fell and smashed a liquor bottle he was carrying. He was taken to the Interstate Hotel to recover, whereupon the hotelier reported next day that Collings had tried to commit suicide. Constable Archer took him to the police lockup, removed his braces and boots, and was careful not to leave anything in his cell with which Collings could injure himself. Archer visited him every 15 to 20 minutes during the day and "he appeared quite rational and said he was sorry for what he had done". The following morning, Collings was found with a ligature tied tightly around his neck. Efforts were made to revive him, but he gave a few gasps and died. The coroner delivered a verdict of "deceased committed suicide by strangling himself while of unsound mind" (AOT POL 205/1).

This episode, together with the wide range of offences committed on Flinders and Cape Barren Islands, shows that the Furneaux Group, although physically isolated from the mainstream of Tasmanian society, faced similar problems. The difference was that,

because of its isolation and small population, gaoling was not usually the best solution. Unfortunately unemployment meant that people had time on their hands. Liquor combined with idleness appears to have been the cause of the majority of offences.

The conflict between Aborigines and the police is now a highly charged subject given the recent publicity by a Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (Johnston 1991). There is a higher proportion of Aborigines at Risdon Gaol than non-Aborigines, and this over-representation has placed great demands upon the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre's legal aid services (Sculthorpe 1980: 3).

Return of Aboriginal Remains and the Push for Land Rights

Lucy Beedon expressed a wish in 1872 that Truganini (one of the last tribal-born Tasmanian Aborigines) live out her last days on Badger Island (AOT CSD 7/33/450; Brownrigg 1872: 8). That did not happen, and her skeleton was subsequently on public display in the Tasmanian Museum in Hobart for almost half a century until it was removed in 1947. The remains of Aborigines buried at Wybalenna and Oyster Cove suffered likewise, being exhumed for 'scientific research' in Australian and overseas institutes. Robert Gardner had the nickname 'Resurrection Bob' for his pilfering of Aboriginal remains from the Wybalenna cemetery and selling them for scientific specimens (*Examiner* 25 May 1883). They were said to be packed in bags and called 'Flinders Island potatoes' (RS 40/3). Henry Collis and Lucy Beedon had complained about the removal of remains of Aborigines in 1873 and 1875 respectively with no action taken (AOT CSD 8/2/833[1]; LSD 2/4/54(6158/1-)[4]). On receiving the letter from Collis, the Colonial Secretary asked the Superintendent of Police what could be done about it (AOT CSD 8/2/833[2]), but no action seems to have resulted.

The lack of action was not surprising as the scientific demand for Aboriginal bodies within the locally prominent Royal Society of Tasmania and the Hobart General Hospital was well known (Robson 1991: 6). In 1970 a University of Tasmania Aboriginal student, Harry Penrith (now Burnham Burnham), wrote to the Trustees of the Tasmanian Museum requesting the return of Truganini's remains (*Togatus* May 1970: 13-15). The election of a new Labor government in 1975 saw the passing of the Tasmanian Museum Act, 1976 which vested them in the Crown. The government returned the remains of Truganini to the Aboriginal people who had her cremated, and scattered her ashes on the Derwent River, 100 years after her death (*Mercury* 1 May 1976). This led to the handing over of the Crowther Collection of Aboriginal skeletons in the Museum to the Aboriginal community. These remains were cremated at Oyster Cove, from which they had been

exhumed by Crowther at the turn of this century and some sent to European researchers (*Weekend Australian* 4, 5 May 1985). The search for further remains continues and many have now been recovered from European institutions (*Mercury* 19 July 1991).

The campaign for the return of Aboriginal remains has been much easier than the achievement of land rights. From the very beginning of white occupation governments have conceded that Aborigines had a claim to be recompensed for the injuries done to them, but land rights were never deemed to be part of this entitlement. In November 1977 some 40 Aborigines petitioned Parliament concerning its "special responsibility towards Tasmanian Aborigines especially in relation to land" (TPP 1978. Number 94: 9). The petition itemised land claimed, including traditional muttonbird islands, Cape Barren Island, rock carving sites and all unalienated crown land (Mansell 1978: 97). The government established an Aboriginal Affairs Study Group which recommended the setting up of a Lands Trust in which Cape Barren, Babel and Great Dog Islands would be vested.

The report was accepted and draft legislation circulated. However, the Franklin Dam issue and the Tasmanian Labor government election loss in 1982 saw the legislation disappear (Ryan 1987: 56). Initially the new Liberal government of Robin Gray refused to recognise land rights although sections of the press, reflecting public opinion, supported limited claims (*Mercury* 20 May 1985). The government eventually softened its stance slightly (*Mercury* 14 June 1985) and prepared to recognise Oyster Cove as Aboriginal land. The *Mercury* noted this to be the "first time a government is set to formally recognise the right of indigenous Aborigines to occupy and possibly administer crown land" (*Mercury* 23 June 1988). One year later the Labor Party was elected with an election pledge to introduce land rights legislation. The Aboriginal Land Rights Act passed through the House of Assembly but was lost by one vote in the Legislative Council in August 1991. Aboriginal activist, Michael Mansell (Plate 7), described the Council as "the last bastion of bigotry in this State" (*Mercury* 20 July 1991). The government fell in 1992 and it is unlikely that the incoming Liberal government will re-introduce the legislation.

The Commonwealth made its contribution to Aboriginal self-help in June 1980 when it acquired Trefoil Island from the Luck family for \$195,000. The island, which has extensive muttonbird rookeries, was vested in trust to Aborigines who formed the Trefoil Island Aboriginal Corporation. About 60 people worked it each muttonbird season until 1990, gaining some measure of independence from the money they earned from the sale



Plate 7. Aboriginal activist, Michael Mansell, with muttonbirders on Great Dog Island in April 1991. At back from left: Vivian Beeton and Ray Gardner. Front from left: Dyan Shaw, Ronnie Summers, Joe Phegan, Michael Mansell and Chris Mansell (Source: I. Skira).

of muttonbirds. Unfortunately, the recent bankruptcy of the Corporation has temporarily halted that independence.

The Aborigines in Tasmania have gained much since they have become active politically. Their main spokesman has been Michael Mansell (Ryan 1987: 52), born and educated in Launceston and Hobart with a law degree from the University of Tasmania. His outspoken and sometimes radical views have made non-Aborigines aware of the existence of Aborigines in Tasmania, as distinct from just Cape Barren Island. The shyness that still is present among the few remaining Aborigines living on Cape Barren Island is absent in Aborigines living on the Tasmanian mainland. They vigorously proclaim their Aboriginality, an important part of which is still to go muttonbirding with their families, Mansell himself not being an exception.

SUMMARY

Unfortunately, most of the information on personalities and the way of life in the Furneaux Group during the 1800s comes from casual observations based on outsider visits of limited duration. Archival and published articles have gone through the screen of other people's views, so it is not known what has been omitted. Documentation is limited and rests on a narrow basis of observation. For the second half of the nineteenth century Nixon, Reibey, Brownrigg and Montgomery provide nearly all the insights. Before them, it was George Augustus Robinson. Drawing conclusions from this meagre evidence must be done with care.

The nineteenth century missionary visitors had good intentions, were sincere and tried to understand and help the Aborigines by listening to them and lobbying on their behalf, often successfully. However, they were conditioned by the times, which dictated that the Aboriginal community had to be 'mothered' before it could be allowed to fend for itself. Also government aid through social welfare was very limited. Pensions were not automatically handed out and it was only through the efforts of people like Archdeacon Reibey that they were paid to Aboriginal women on Tin Kettle and Chappell Islands (TPP 1862-65. Finance). Other assistance derived through the efforts of the ecclesiastic visitors included the reservation of land for their exclusive benefit, the enactment of muttonbirding and sealing regulations, and the provision of a schoolteacher and policeman.

A number of correspondents pointed out the deterioration in quality of life for the Aborigines as a result of alcohol abuse. The Aborigines had boats and therefore could

purchase liquor when taking muttonbirds to mainland Tasmanian markets, in addition to purchasing from the Long Island store and from local people. Temperance pledges instigated by Marcus Brownrigg on Cape Barren Island were part of a strong temperance movement then operating all over Tasmania (Robson 1991: 12). To clergymen alcohol was the devil's drink and they made their views clear. This does not mean that the Aboriginal community was suffering from alcohol abuse to any greater extent than other communities, but the problem became more widely known in their case due to the publicity it received from the missionary visits.

The socially destructive combination of unemployment and alcohol resulted in some Aborigines committing offences and being fined or spending time in gaol. The conflict between Aborigines and the police put great pressure on the legal services of Aboriginal Centres, but on the other hand, the legal experience gained has helped Aborigines to become very competent lobbyists for land rights.

The recent large increase in population of Aborigines is due to recognition and acceptance of their Aboriginality. In the last 20 years they have achieved great advances in social welfare provision and the recognition of a separate and special Aboriginality. This has given rise to a sub-culture among urban Aborigines (TPP 1978. Number 94: 7; Anonymous 1982: 525). Whatever disadvantages they have to endure, loneliness is not one of them. Constant visiting of friends and relations exists. In all this is the binding tradition of muttonbirding which has enabled the Aboriginal community to stay together. Without the presence of muttonbirding as a social tradition among Aborigines, it is probable that the community would have disintegrated once it left the haven of Cape Barren Island. In recent decades the upsurge of Aboriginality has strengthened the link with the 'land', of which the muttonbird islands are an integral part. The achievement of land rights is currently at the mercy of the government, but a slow recognition by all politicians that land rights are justified seems likely.

CHAPTER 7

THE MUTTONBIRD INDUSTRY, 1803-1900

"The sooty petrel, called Mount-Pitt bird is amongst these islands in great numbers. Wherever the tufts of wiry grass are seen, these birds will usually be found. They burrow in the ground under these tufts but the length of a man's arm is sufficient to reach them" (Flinders 1801: 26).

The chronology for a review of the history of muttonbirding in the nineteenth century falls into two convenient periods — from the beginning of settlement to 1850 and 1850 to 1901. During the 50 years from the first settlement of Tasmania by Europeans in 1803, sealers occupied many of the smaller islands in the Furneaux Group, whilst Aborigines were brought over from the Tasmanian mainland and resettled at Wybalenna on Flinders Island. By 1850 the Aboriginal settlement at Wybalenna had been disbanded for three years while the whole of Flinders Island had just been leased to Malcolm Laing Smith. The period from 1850 to 1901 was one of major disruption to the sealers and their descendants. Forced onto Cape Barren Island which became their homeland, they had to come to grips with the continuing push for land from immigrants.

THE MUTTONBIRD ISLANDS

The taking of muttonbirds for commercial purposes began in, and has always been confined to, the islands in Bass Strait. Apart from Matthew Flinders and George Bass, early descriptions of these islands have come from T. Scott (1828) and George Augustus Robinson. Scott's succinct descriptions of the islands were based on information provided by James Campbell, an unidentified boat-man (ML A606). Robinson wrote copiously about his experiences and kept a detailed daily diary of his travels and contacts with Aborigines. His recordings of places, events and other pertinent facts have largely been verified by present day evidence.

In the early 1830s these contemporary observers found muttonbirds abundant on Waterhouse, Swan, Babel, Little Green, Little Dog, Great Dog, Vansittart, Woody, Chappell, Goose and Big Green Islands. They were also present in smaller numbers on numerous other islands including Preservation, Rum, Prime Seal and East Kangaroo Islands (Table 6), but absent from Badger Island. East Kangaroo, Prime Seal and Woody Islands were well wooded with she-oaks *Casuarina stricta*, scrub thickets of *Leptospermum* and *Melaleuca* spp., whilst the barilla vegetation of *Atriplex* and *Rhagodia* spp. covered Chappell and Big Green Islands.

Table 6. First Written Record of Muttonbird Rookeries on Islands in Bass Strait.

Island	Year	Comments	Source
Swan	1798		Flinders (1801)
Preservation	1798	Taken in any numbers	Flinders (1801)
Passage	1798		Flinders (1801)
Babel Isles	1798	Much frequented by sooty petrels	Flinders (1814)
Battery	1798	Sooty petrels found there	Flinders (1814)
Waterhouse	1817	Immense quantities	<i>Hob. Town Gazette</i> 21 June 1817
Chappell	1828	In great numbers	Scott (1828)
East Kangaroo	1828	Numbers of muttonbirds	Scott (1828)
Forsyth	1828	Covered with muttonbirds	Scott (1828)
Goose	1828	Muttonbirds nest here	Scott (1828)
Great Dog	1828	Very large rookery	Scott (1828)
Little Swan	1828	Numerous colony of muttonbirds	Scott (1828)
Prime Seal	1828	Many muttonbirds	Scott (1828)
Woody	1828	Many muttonbirds	Scott (1828)
Doughboys	1830	Aborigines got muttonbirds	Robinson (1966)
Stack	1830	Muttonbird rookery	Robinson (1966)
Steep	1830	Largest muttonbird rookery	Robinson (1966)
Trefoil	1830	Muttonbird rookery	Robinson (1966)
Little Dog	1831	Whole island bird rookery	Robinson (1966)
Petrels	1866	Men employed muttonbirding	<i>Examiner</i> 24 4 1866

The wildlife found on the islands was diverse. Wallabies abounded on several, such as Great Dog Island, from which they are now extinct, while snakes were found on most, but were particularly common on Big Green, Chappell, and Woody Islands. The muttonbird populations on these three islands were also large. James Backhouse described his walk across Big Green Island as most fatiguing because of "...the thickness of the herbage and the abundance of muttonbird burrows, with which nearly the whole island is thickly populated" (Backhouse 16 October 1832).

However, the ecology of these islands quickly changed with settlement. In the 1860s Big Green Island came into private ownership, and the snakes were exterminated. The native vegetation of barilla was cleared which resulted in a large decrease in the muttonbird population. The island earned a reputation for being one of the best grazing islands in the Furneaux Group despite the prevalence of thistles and nettles in areas that had previously been dominated by barilla (*Hobart Town Gazette* 23 July 1867: 1331). Although muttonbirds continued to breed on the island, there were only sufficient birds to sustain subsistence muttonbirding for immediate families occupying the island.

Woody and Vansittart Islands were among the best locations for settlement. Within a few years of the arrival of settlers muttonbirds were extinct on both islands. The main cause for the extinctions was predation by pigs on Vansittart Island, and destruction of habitat by clearing and fire on Woody Island (TPP 1908. Number 57: 1). Being subjected to trampling and predation by domestic stock, and fire and land clearing (probably through fire), the rookeries did not survive. The domestic stock consisted initially of goats and pigs, which were easy to keep as they did not require introduced pasture to survive. With the advent of land clearing and introduced pasture grasses, large numbers of sheep and cattle were grazed which prevented muttonbirds re-colonising their original habitat.

In the mid-nineteenth century this destruction was of no consequence to muttonbirders, because there were large numbers of birds on other islands to sustain the small number of people economically dependent on them. The principal rookeries for exploitation were on Chappell, Great Dog, Little Dog and Little Green Islands, and later, Babel Island (Table 7). Early visitors to Great Dog Island said it consisted of two muttonbird rookeries (*Examiner* 28 May 1883) while Montgomery said that the birds bred only at one end (Montgomery 1891: 6). At the present day it is difficult to visualise the island consisting of two rookeries or muttonbirds breeding at one end, as the birds nest all over the island, and there is no obvious natural boundary existing now that may have explained those earlier descriptions. Waterhouse, Swan and Goose Islands were too

distant for commercial exploitation by the sealers, and within a few years the government had erected lighthouses on Swan and Goose Islands, making them out of bounds to muttonbirders. Up to the 1860s none of the other islands were freehold and the inhabitants, had to a degree, the freedom to go muttonbirding where they wished. However, Chappell Island became the centre for muttonbirding because of its huge number of birds, its central location, and the fact that it was unoccupied. As the other islands became leased by outsiders, the Aborigines lost access to them.

The geological base of Babel, Chappell, Great Dog, Little Dog, and Little Green Islands is granite. In contrast, Big Green, East Kangaroo, Tin Kettle and Woody Islands are of

Table 7. Area of Muttonbird Rookeries Exploited for Commercial Purposes in the 1980s.

Island	Total area (ha)	Rookery area (ha)	Total burrows	Source
FURNEAUX GROUP				
Babel	425	380	2,860,000	Towney & Skira 1985a
Big Green	270	10	30,000	Skira unpublished
Chappell	349	160	640,000	Brothers & Skira 1987
East Kangaroo	200	15	40,000	Skira unpublished
Great Dog	377	170	952,000	Skira & Brothers 1988b
Little Dog	100	75	352,000	Brothers & Skira 1988
Little Green	92	59	271,000	Skira & Brothers 1988a
HUNTER GROUP				
Hunter	6,960	40	186,000	Skira unpublished
New Year	40	25	125,000	Brothers unpublished
Robbins	10,940	6	33,000	Skira unpublished
Steep	100	25	310,000	Brothers unpublished
Three Hummock	7,960	29	106,000	Skira unpublished
Trefoil	140	100	1,540,000	Towney & Skira 1985b
Walker	760	27	160,000	Skira unpublished

post-Tertiary sandy limestone which weathers into a richer soil than granite, and which may therefore explain why people exploited them for pastoral purposes. Given the extinction of muttonbirds on some islands, it was more than good fortune that muttonbirds survived elsewhere in the Furneaux Group, considering that many of the rookeries were grazed, and regularly burnt to promote new feed for stock and to open up the tussocks on the rookeries so that burrows were more visible to muttonbirders. With the exception of Great Dog Island, small areas on other islands became freehold. The new owners introduced stock, which became the bane of muttonbirding, and arguments raged over whether muttonbirding or grazing interests should be accorded priority (*Examiner* 1, 5, 16 August 1902). The graziers felt that their activities had no longterm ill effects on the rookeries. To the muttonbirders, particularly the Aborigines, their subsistence bush economy was under threat. Their main rookery in the early 1900s, Chappell Island, was one of the worst affected.

Alone among the muttonbird islands, no domestic stock was placed on Babel Island, probably because of its remoteness, the difficulty of landing and the lack of green feed for stock, although these factors did not prevent similar islands from being grazed. Another possible reason was that the original purchaser, William Lawton, who lived in George Town where he also owned land, did not want to be an absentee landlord running stock under the supervision of a manager (as Robert Gardner and James Walden both did). Because it remained undeveloped, the muttonbird rookery on Babel Island still covers most of the island in spite of past heavy exploitation.

MUTTONBIRDING TO 1850

The sealers who settled in Bass Strait would have had some knowledge of wildfowl, how to preserve them, and how to use the by-products as a cash-crop. Once the number of seals in Bass Strait fell beyond the point at which harvesting was economic, the sealers remaining in the region lived a subsistence life-style based predominantly on muttonbirds. Had the birds not existed, there would have been no economic reason to remain on the islands.

When James Kelly made his observations of life in Bass Strait in 1816, seals were still probably being harvested in sufficient numbers for the individual itinerant sealer to make a living. But as the seals declined, muttonbirds replaced them as the principal resource for the sealers who, by now, were beginning to settle permanently on the islands with their Aboriginal women. James Munro was one of the first sealers to make the islands his permanent home, and may have done so by 1818 (Backhouse and Tylor 1862: 93;

Plomley and Henley 1990: 54). He was certainly known to be living there in 1822 (*Examiner* 29 January 1845). James Everett, Edward Mansell and Richard Maynard arrived several years later (Plomley and Henley 1990: 80, 89, 90). But a trade in muttonbirds and their by-products was well established when John Boulton visited the Furneaux Group in 1823.

At this time it appears that adult birds were killed solely for feathers and not for meat, whilst chicks were killed for meat, fat and oil. Eggs were collected for immediate and later consumption, and were a staple food of the sealers. The first export of muttonbirds or their products from Bass Strait is not known. It was probably before 1822. On 19 October 1822 a colonialist, J. Raine, in a memorial to solicit land from the Governor of Van Diemen's Land, stated that he had loaded the ship *Regalia* for England with "7 skins of feathers (500 lbs), 2 casks of native gum, and 400 swan skins," in addition to wool and blue gum, from Van Diemen's Land, elephant seal oil from Macquarie Island and other commodities (HRA III, IV: 434). The feathers may have been either swan or muttonbird feathers, given their stated quantity and their association with other primary produce from Van Diemen's Land.

John Boulton is the first person (of whom we have knowledge) to portray the commercial exploitation of muttonbirds:

Cape Barren is about 100 miles round, it is very mountainous, and abounds in a small kind of kangaroo, called Walloby [*sic*] [*Thylogale billardieri*]. Between it and Clarke's island there is a passage for small vessels. On Preservation Island, are several boats' crews who go there to get a supply of mutton birds, which is a main article of their food. These birds, so called from their resemblance in flavour to mutton, are migratory, in September they come in flocks to the island, and remain, on or about the shore till April, when they disappear; they burrow in the ground like rabbits where they make holes to lay their eggs which are as large as a hen's egg. In the evening, when they swarm to their places, it is very easy to knock them down by dozens, merely by swinging a stick right and left. At daybreak they are to be heard making a deafening noise, as they proceed towards the seaside for the purpose of seeking their food.

They are so numerous that I have seen a distance of 3 miles entirely covered with them. The size of these birds is equal to a common sized

fowl — they are of a dark lead colour; and are a nourishing sort of food — when eaten with potatoes, to such constitutions as those who are inured to a life of hardiness.

At a certain time of the year they grow lean which is the best time for plucking the feathers and a black woman will pluck 500 birds per day for her work — the feathers are usually sold for flour, spirits, etc (Boulton 1986: 16-17).

Boulton does not mention how the muttonbirds were caught, but the method described by his contemporaries was probably in use. James Backhouse related it as follows:

It is common to employ a dog for the purpose of drawing them out, but the Aboriginal women, who are very expert in all matters of this nature, use a stick with a hook, which they introduce into the nest, and draw out the birds. When wanted in large quantities, for the sake of their feathers, a wholesale plan of taking them is resorted to. A pit is dug near the sea-shore, six or eight feet square, and half that depth. A hedge of shrubs or sticks is formed in two lines, enclosing a great number of the holes, and converging towards the pit. A similar hedge is erected on the far side of the pit to hide the view of the ocean. A few men take their stations at the end of the enclosure furthest from the excavation, and when the birds sally forth in the morning, they urge them onwards towards the pit. Being unable to hide among the grass and scrub that surrounds them, they tumble into the pit one after another, and are suffocated. Immense numbers annually meet their death in this way, frequently on the same spot of ground, and yet the birds are said to show no sensible diminution. Those which survive are not scared away, and those which have been killed appear not to be missed. Twenty birds well picked will furnish one pound of feathers; and between two and three tons of these have been sold by sealers at the east end of Bass Straits in one season. The price of feathers at Hobart Town is sixpence per pound; they are used for beds, but are said to have an oily and unpleasant smell (Backhouse and Tylor 1862: 93).

This very destructive method of catching muttonbirds, plucking them on the spot and discarding the carcase was employed throughout the whole season and must have caused a decrease in the population. Breeding birds would have been caught in large numbers, particularly as they form a major proportion of the muttonbirds that are present in

September and October, a time when sealers were actively seeking the first birds of the new season (Figure 5). The sealers again harvested them for food and feathers after the birds returned from the pre-laying exodus in the third week of November (Stokes 1846: 264). However, no rookeries are known to have been exterminated solely on account of muttonbirding, probably because there were only a handful of sealers and their Aboriginal women catching the birds for their feathers. The pit method was still in use in 1848 (Elwes 1859: 398), but by 1872 was superseded as the season's work was by then confined to chicks, sufficient feathers being gathered from them for sale (Brownrigg 1872: 70).

In his journal, Backhouse mentions that the sealers pickled and dried numbers of muttonbirds as well as eating them fresh, but by far the greater number were taken for their feathers (Backhouse 8 October 1832). According to another contemporary source, John Parish (a sealer who had spent many years on the islands and was known to Robinson), the sealers sold the feathers for 5d or 6d per pound and it took the feathers of 25 birds to make a pound weight. The sealers caught the birds in the same manner described above by Backhouse (Robinson 1966: 256).

The other main by-product was muttonbird oil which was obtained from chicks by killing and then squeezing them (Robinson 1987: 222). To catch the young birds the Aboriginal women selected shallow holes by testing the depth with a stick called a "spit" (Robinson 1966: 273). They then tore up the burrow with the spit or stoved it in with their feet to grab the bird inside (Robinson 1987: 222). The women were also said to wear a glove when extracting the birds to protect their fingers from the bites of birds, lizards and snakes. Later, fingerless gloves were cut out of ordinary gloves, socks or other clothing such as flannel (*Examiner* 7 April 1914).

In 1839 the price received for feathers was 3d a pound, though formerly it had been as high as 1/- (Stokes 1846: 452). Stokes noted that the cargo of two boats he saw consisted of 30 bags, each weighing nearly 30 pounds or "the spoil of 18,000 birds". Several years later the feathers were fetching only 2d a pound (Elwes 1854: 255). The price fluctuations were probably due to feathers from domestic poultry being more readily available as an alternative as the population of Van Diemen's Land increased. Apart from feathers the sealers continued to collect adult birds to salt or smoke, eggs in November and December, and fledglings for their oil and fat. The young birds were also salted after being plucked and cleaned or smoked and dried in the large chimneys of the sealers huts (Broadfoot 1845: 188). The sealers sailed to Launceston two or three times a year to sell their goods at the markets and returned with stores (Stokes 1846: 453). A

market for eggs existed as far away as Hobart (*Examiner* 20 December 1845). The oil was sold in Launceston at 4/- to 4/6 a gallon (Elwes 1854: 255) and mainly used in lamps. By the time of Stokes's visit the muttonbird industry was well established, and based on prices obtained for the by-products, the sealers and their families were able to achieve a subsistence lifestyle on the islands. Without the presence of muttonbirds, it is doubtful whether the sealers could have subsisted on the remnant population of seals.

Two methods of killing muttonbirds instantaneously were developed. In the first method, the neck of the bird was held between the index and middle fingers. A quick flick of the wrist broke the bird's neck. This method probably developed early in the industry as it is described in 1862 as if it had been the accepted technique for many years (*Geelong Advertiser* 14 May 1862). It became established as the most efficient method of the two as, apart from being the quicker, it only required one hand instead of two. The alternate method, described as early as 1848, was to crush the skull between the fingers or palm of the hand (Elwes 1859: 399). It was said to be the preferred way to dispatch young muttonbirds, though old birds were killed by the quick jerk-of-the-wrist method (*Examiner* 26 April 1892).

MUTTONBIRDING FROM 1850 to 1900

Observations of the Early Missionaries

Information about the Aborigines and the muttonbird economy between 1850 and 1900 comes from a variety of sources, but in particular from Church of England missionaries who were regular visitors to the Furneaux Group during this period. Some missionaries enjoyed the experience of observing muttonbirding more than others, so the quantity and quality of information varies widely.

During this period the muttonbirding season extended over six weeks and was a family affair. Generally the men caught the birds and the children cut off wings and feet, while the women plucked, scalded the birds and helped the men to open and pack them in brine. Muttonbirding was a very social occasion, an opportunity for families to renew friendships with other seldom seen families. This strong social tradition continued as late as the 1930s, when activities such as dances were still held on Saturday night on Great Dog Island during the season (Dorothy Cook interview). Initially most Aborigines took their goods and chattels, their poultry, cats and dogs, to Chappell Island, but towards the end of the century Babel Island became prominent.

Up to the mid-nineteenth century, muttonbirds were processed in the open, and any shelters were for survival and protection from the weather. The population of sealers and their dependents was very small and there was no need for processing sheds. When Archdeacon Reibey began his visits in 1862, muttonbirding had already become established as part of the tradition of the islands, symbolised by tiny huts erected on Chappell Island. The huts also gave a sense of ownership of the rookeries. Before the season's work started, salt, of which up to three tons was used on Great Dog Island alone, and casks were taken out to the islands (*Examiner* 14 February, 5 March 1867). The use of the original Aboriginal digging stick changed to one for transporting muttonbirds to the processing location. In 1862 muttonbirds were still carried by hand back to the processing shed, with up to one hundred birds said to be carried this way (*Geelong Advertiser* 14 May 1862), and it seems likely that the stick was already in use if such a large number of birds were carried simultaneously. The spit was approximately 1.5 m long, 2.5 cm in diameter and cut from local *Leptospermum* or *Melaleuca spp.* Arriving at the rookery, the catcher stuck his spit upright into the ground. Thrusting a hand into a burrow, the young muttonbird was caught, and after being killed, was threaded onto the spit by the lower beak to prevent the oil draining out.

By 1862 the people had what they called 'three harvests' (*Geelong Advertiser* 14 May 1862). The season commenced with the harvesting of eggs, which were sold in Launceston. The second harvest was the oil harvest, which occurred when the chicks had almost attained full size. The birds were said to be heated over a fire and then submitted to pressure to force out the oil. This may have occurred in some type of boiler. The third harvest was salting, which immediately followed oiling, when the chicks were fully fledged. Ten years later, in 1872, the season according to Brownrigg, consisted of oiling, fattening and salting (Brownrigg 1872: 68-70). Oiling was catching fledglings that were not large enough to process for meat, obtaining the oil, and using the carcass for fattening before discarding it. On average, 100 birds produced 1 gallon of oil, and a good season would yield about 3,000 gallons. Fattening was trying out the skins in a pot or boiler and collecting the fat; in certain instances pressure was also used in trying out. In salting, the birds were salt cured in barrels. Sufficient feathers were gathered during the course of this season and no harvest was required of adult birds, as occurred in the early years of the industry. Though Reibey does not mention it, fattening was probably also carried out in 1862, as it seems that a routine muttonbirding process had been established by then.

The Aborigines still worked outside at cleaning and preserving the birds as the huts were too small except for accommodation. Major developments in the construction of

processing sheds occurred with the immigration of non-Aboriginal settlers who also made a living from muttonbirding on the islands that they occupied. The muttonbird industry was now an important regional economy, and with an influx of new people into it better facilities for processing the ever increasing number of harvested muttonbirds became necessary. By 1892 each family on Chappell Island had their own "dwelling place, pluck house, scalding shed, etc." (*Examiner* 26 April 1892). The huts were built from rough palings, most of which were imported from Launceston. The floors were covered with a carpet of freshly cut grass which was changed every few days.

As early as 1863 an export market to Australian mainland states and New Zealand was established for muttonbirds and their by-products (Statistics of Tasmania, 1863: 58), although it was not great when compared to the estimated annual catch of around 200,000 birds. The products were exported out of Launceston by merchants who bought them from the muttonbirders. Sales included 100 gallons of oil to Victoria in 1863, 10,100 birds to New Zealand in 1868, 1,200 gallons of fat to New South Wales in 1869, and 1,449 gallons of oil to Victoria and New South Wales in 1877 (Statistics of Tasmania, 1863-1877). Their value varied from 6/- a gallon for oil in 1863 to 4/- a gallon in 1866, 5/10 per gallon for fat and £1/3/- per 100 birds. The value of the products was similar to the price recorded by Stokes 20 years earlier, and 40 years later the Islanders continued to receive a similar amount. The oil was used in Victoria and New South Wales as in Tasmania — for machinery, railway engines and carriages, and for medicinal purposes. Throughout the 1870s, the first railways were being constructed in Tasmania and large quantities of muttonbird oil were purchased for lubrication (TPP 1872-1887. Launceston and Western Railway Annual Reports). The amount of oil used gradually increased from 140 gallons in 1872 to 850 gallons in 1887. As the oil did not require refining, it could be used the moment it arrived in Launceston from the islands. The fat was used for soap-making, for smelting (in foundries), for tanning and for machinery (*Examiner* 26 April 1892). Launceston companies such as the ship chandlers, C. H. Smith and Co., developed an extensive fellmongery trade which included supplying tanneries, railway companies and other businesses with muttonbird oil, fat and feathers (C. H. Smith and Co. Account Journals). However, the market for feathers was now limited, mainly because the typical musty petrel smell could not be eliminated. It was not until the beginning of the twentieth century, when a chemical method of deodorising the feathers was found, that there was again a widespread use for them.

There is no evidence to suggest that the muttonbirders were involved themselves, either individually or as a collective, in the muttonbird trade with the mainland states. The large amounts of oil and birds exported virtually rules that out. The money they received from

the merchants was just sufficient to give them a breathing space for another year. The lack of money, however, did not prevent some Aborigines like Lucy Beedon and her family becoming well respected and well known in Launceston, which they visited on periodic selling trips with muttonbirds, oil and other produce (*Examiner* 19 June 1868). As we have seen, the 1860s was a period of major upheaval in the Aboriginal community, brought about by changes in land tenure. The social and economic values of muttonbirding, and the leadership provided by Lucy Beedon especially, were forces that kept it together.

The number of birds caught during the 1850s and 1860s is not known but was probably less than 200,000 per year, given that the number of people involved in muttonbirding was only 50 to 60, including children (Table 8). Furthermore, based on the largest quantity of 1,500 gallons of oil exported out of Launceston, approximately 120,000 birds would have had to be killed annually, assuming that 100 to 120 muttonbirds were required to produce a gallon of oil (*Examiner* 8 February 1876). It seems unlikely therefore that 2,000 gallons of oil and 300,000 birds were taken annually in the 1850s as stated by Benvenuto Smith (Murray-Smith 1973: 178). The only way that such a high number of birds could have been harvested was if the figure included adult birds taken for feathers, chicks taken for oil only, and chicks taken for meat only. However, the taking of adult birds purely for feathers had by this time ceased or was so small as to be insignificant. A taking rate of 200,000 per year also hardly justifies the Reverend Richardson's complaint to Reibey that the Islanders, in making a miserable and precarious living from muttonbirding by the wholesale destruction of the bird, were "killing the goose with the golden egg" (*Church News* 20 January 1863: 125). But the Aborigines were not complaining and the government did not care, so nothing could have been done even if action had been warranted.

The major problem in the conservation of muttonbirds was not the harvesting of eggs and slaughtering of chicks or adults, but stock grazing on the muttonbird islands following the alienation of land. This created tension between muttonbirders and the graziers that no amount of discussion resolved. The muttonbirders felt that their livelihood was under threat. Thirty years later the dispute spilled into the newspapers (discussed below). Although receiving probably less than half of what the Launceston merchants received for selling muttonbirds and their by-products, the Aborigines were concerned about the continual loss of their resource through land alienation. During the Reverend Fereday's visit to the Furneaux Group in 1871, the Aborigines petitioned the Governor to reserve Chappell Island for them. They viewed with alarm the sale or leasing of islands (*Church News* 10 March 1871: 58). In fact the alienation of islands occurred so comprehensively

during the 1870s, that by the end of the decade Chappell and Babel Islands were the only two islands available for muttonbirding without requiring permission from a landholder. The Aborigines in January 1877 petitioned the government to preserve Great Dog Island for them, and although the Solicitor-General allowed them to take muttonbirds in certain months, in practice they had to ask Robert Gardner, the lessee (AOT LSD 2/4/54(6158/1-)[5, 6]).

Table 8. Muttonbird Statistics for the Furneaux Group (Furn. Group) in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries.

Year	Locality	Number of birds taken	Oil (gals)	Fat (gals)	Eggs	Source
1831	Furn. Group				'000s	Backhouse 1843
1858	Chappell I.	300,000	2,000			Murray-Smith 1973
1864	Chappell I.				300,000	Lord 1908
1872	Furn. Group	'millions'	3,000			Brownrigg 1872
1876	Chappell I.	400,000	1,000	4,000		<i>Examiner</i> 8.2.1876
1883	Chappell I.	300,000	3,000			<i>Examiner</i> 25.5.1883
1890	Chappell I.	204,000			*100s of dozens	Montgomery 1891 * <i>Examiner</i> 8.5.1890
1900	Furn. Group	500,000				<i>Examiner</i> 2.6.1900
1904	Furn. Group	379,804				TPP 1908
1905	Furn. Group	459,094				TPP 1908
1906	Furn. Group	493,777				TPP 1908
1907	Furn. Group	572,671				TPP 1908
1908	Furn. Group	1,030,000				TPP 1908
1911	Furn. Group	800,000				Mollison 1974

(2.5 tons of feathers were also gathered in 1831)

The majority of Aborigines went to Chappell Island, though some worked for non-Aboriginal shed owners on Great Dog Island. In early February 1871 Fereday found the Aborigines moving about the islands en route to Chappell and other islands for the oiling harvest. There were 40 people including 18 children, stopping off on Badger Island before Chappell Island; the wife and children of old James Everett had gone down

Franklin Sound; John Maynard was about to start for Great Dog Island from Cape Barren Island while Phil Thomas and his family were already there, sitting "under a shady shelter of she-oak tree" (*Church News* 10 March 1871: 58). Fereday was frustrated in his missionary duties because the Aborigines were always on the move to go muttonbirding "from which they entirely derive their living" (*Church News* 1 April 1871: 59). At any other time he would have found them at home. This movement of people further suggests that a main season for muttonbirding had already become routine for the Aborigines.

Observations of Canon Brownrigg

When Marcus Brownrigg commenced his visitations, the 'muttonbird season' was recognised to commence near the beginning of March and continue until the chicks fledged and departed in early May. From May until July the little sailing vessels, the so-called 'mosquito fleet', arrived at the Launceston wharf with "muttonbirds, oil, fat, feathers etc.". Brownrigg could never reconcile himself to muttonbirding and was revolted by the activities and the smell. On his first visit to the Furneaux Group in February 1872 he described Chappell Island as very bleak and barren looking and infested with snakes, while the long coarse grass made walking unpleasant (Brownrigg 1872: 63). He was struck by the crudeness of the huts, which he described as:

...odd looking structures; they seldom exceed four feet in height at the walls, and about six feet at the ridge. The sides and roof are made up of light sticks, and covered in with long coarse grass. An opening at the side forms the door, and a few stones built up at one end serves for the fireplace. Grass is then strewed upon the earthen floor...(Brownrigg 1872: 61).

The huts were located at three harbours on the western and southern sides of Chappell Island. Providing cheap and temporary accommodation, they were cold, damp, wind-swept and uninhabitable during the winter months when few people visited Chappell Island. In accepting such low standards of living in conjunction with low levels of hygiene, the Aborigines also lowered their resistance to disease, and an outbreak of typhoid occurred in 1879 (TPP 1879. Number 56).

Typhoid was a major cause of death among Tasmanian people in the nineteenth century (Sprott 1900: ix). In the islands it was standard practice to discard near the huts the offal from processing muttonbirds. The typhus outbreak resulted in 19 cases of infection

among 105 people on Chappell Island. Three from the Beedon family died while the Everetts and Maynards who associated with them during the season suffered only sickness. The epidemic did not reach the other muttonbird islands. According to Dr Vines, who investigated the epidemic, none of the white muttonbirders suffered from it because "...they and the more intelligent of the Islanders in general attribute the disease to the stench arising from the refuse heaps of mutton birds and the general unsanitary habits of the people" (TPP 1879. Number 56: 5). Henry Collis, the resident schoolteacher, dispensed medicine among the sick and within a short time the episode was forgotten (AOT CSD 10/6). Generally, accidents and sickness were rare during the muttonbird season. In 1845 John Parish lost one of his men while collecting eggs on Chappell Island. The man died in the boat while pulling down a sail (*Examiner* 20 December 1845). Some 40 years later a young 17 year old Aboriginal man died in George Town where he was taken after getting a severe cold while muttonbirding on Chappell Island (*Examiner* 9 April 1881).

Despite all his visits, Brownrigg made no recommendations for regulating the taking of muttonbirds. In part, this probably reflected the lack of any substantial game laws in Tasmania at that time, as the few existing regulations dealt mainly with wallaby hunting, game birds, and the protection of introduced exotic birds such as sparrows and starlings. Brownrigg's interest lay in temperance, and in resettling the Aborigines at The Corner. The government did not see any urgent need for regulations either, as Chappell Island and several minor islands were already reserved for muttonbirding by Aborigines.

On Brownrigg's fifth mission visit in 1876, his superior, Bishop Bromby, paid his only visit to the Furneaux Group (*Examiner* 8 February 1876; Murray-Smith 1979: 112-123). Generally unimpressed by the Aborigines, partly because of their propensity to alcohol addiction, the Bishop had ideas about muttonbirding which he considered would 'smarten up' the people. To him, the Aborigines were mortgaging each season's earnings from muttonbirding for the purchase of brandy from the non-Aboriginal lessees. The concerns he and some Aborigines had for the community regarding the supply of alcohol led him to recommend that the government appoint a police constable to follow the Aborigines to Chappell Island in the muttonbird season (AOT CSD 11/1/790). The Aborigines seemed to be indifferent to financial incentives. They did not save their money — outside the muttonbird season — or work hard (features typical of peasant societies; Taussig 1977: 131). Nevertheless, to prevent their exploitation, Bromby suggested that family muttonbird licences be issued for a modest charge to the Aborigines and to other people who had resided in the Group for twelve months. Whether Bishop Bromby brought his suggestions (which were published in the *Examiner*), to the notice

of the government is not known, but nothing came of them. It was not until 30 years later that licence fees were introduced.

At the time of Bromby's visit the population in the Furneaux Group was about 250, of whom 35 percent were Aborigines (Brownrigg 1872: iv). Bromby's estimate of the annual harvest was 400,000 birds from Chappell Island, 4,000 gallons of fat (25 birds per gallon), and 1,000 gallons of oil (100-120 birds per gallon). The prices attained in Launceston were 10/- per 100 birds, 2/6 per gallon for oil and 1/6 per gallon for fat (*Examiner* 8 February 1876). This annual harvest figure for Chappell Island is, again, probably an over-estimation, because in Montgomery's time in the 1890s the average annual harvest for the island was about 200,000 birds (see below). The annual harvest in 1876 was more likely to be about 150,000 or less on Chappell Island, and 250,000 to 300,000 for all the islands in the Furneaux Group. By the 1880s muttonbirds and their by-products had an established reputation. They had appeared in many international exhibitions, including the Great Exhibition in London of 1851 and the Melbourne International Exhibition of 1888.

Observations of Bishop Montgomery

Henry Bryant (also spelt Briant), one of the 1880s settlers, took Bishop Montgomery around on his first visit to the Furneaux Group in 1891. The Bishop saw his first muttonbird on Little Dog Island where the three Holt brothers owned 40 acres each, or two thirds of the island. The brothers lived in crude muttonbird huts divided into a kitchen and sleeping room with roofs thatched of grass (*Church News* 1 June 1891: 466). Behind the huts were sheds containing cauldrons for trying out fat, drying places and rows of barrels. The families had to bring in water and firewood, as the island was devoid of both. According to Montgomery, each brother caught an average of 27,000 muttonbirds. The island was free from the two problems that Montgomery considered spoilt the muttonbird industry. These were free-ranging stock and snakes. Little Dog Island had been stocked previously but the Holt brothers believed that stock was detrimental to the birds and had them removed (TPP 1908. Number 57: 2). Similarly, snakes were once present, but vigilance reduced their numbers to such an extent that they were quite rare for many years (AOT AA 612/21/2, Constable Berryman to Superintendent of Police, Launceston, 26 August 1938).

Montgomery also visited Great Dog and Chappell Islands (Plate 8). Great Dog Island was still rented by Robert Gardner of Launceston who had a manager living on the island tending his cattle. The Hill family took some birds but a significant proportion of the



Plate 8. Boat Harbour at Chappell Island in December 1893
(Source: Australasian 30 December 1893).

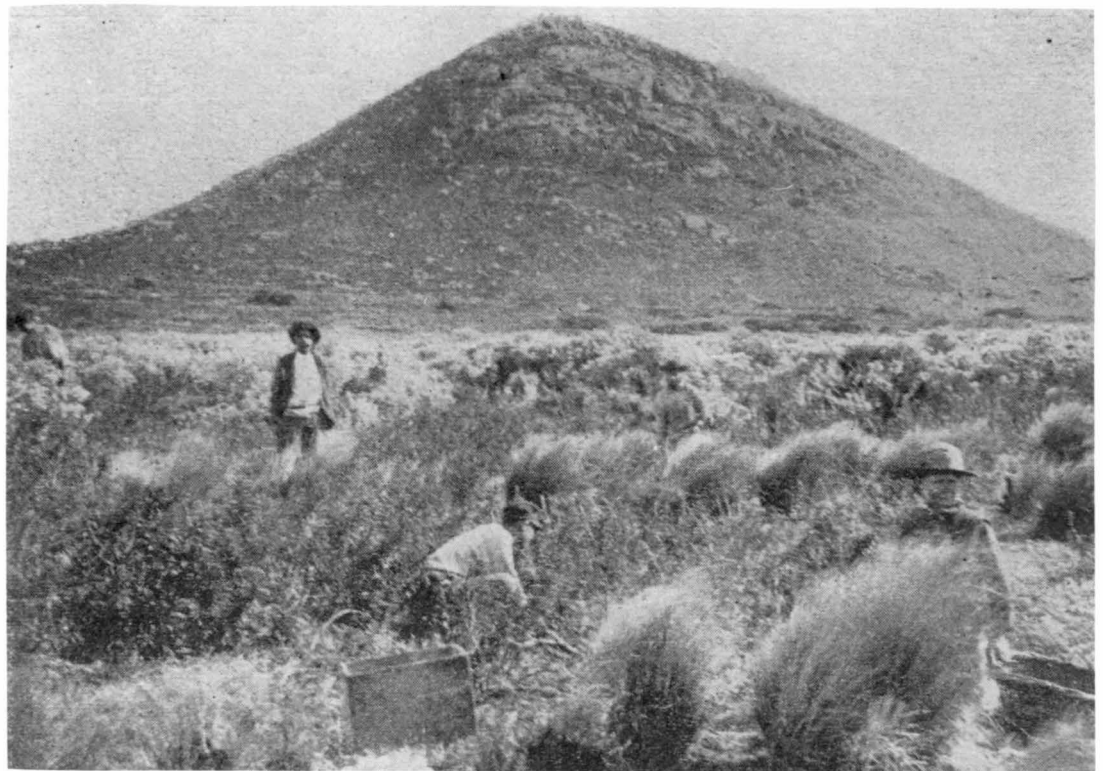


Plate 9. Aborigines collecting muttonbird eggs on Chappell Island in
December 1893 (Source: Australasian 30 December 1893).

rookery was leased out to Europeans who employed Aborigines. In 1890 one party was said to have taken 40,000 muttonbirds. Montgomery saw the damage that the cattle were doing to the rookery, despite the presence of much harder ground compared to Chappell Island and other islands, and was told that Gardner intended to take them off and substitute sheep. He never did and continued to run some 300 cattle (*Church News* 1 April 1896: 446; 3 October 1899: 1123).

On Chappell Island, Montgomery passed under a 'Triumphal Arch' erected in his honour to a cluster of huts where he met the heads of the main muttonbirding families (*Church News* 1 September 1891: 515). Their names were a roll call of the families from Cape Barren Island — Burgess, Brown, Maynard, Beedon, Smith and Mansell. Missing were Thomas and Bryant, who arrived with their families later, when Montgomery was preparing to leave for home. The muttonbirders told him that in 1890 there were 21 families who salted down 204,000 birds, worth £1,020 or 10/- per 100 birds. This price was similar to that obtained fourteen years previously. The 1891 season turned out to be poor as a result of a 'waterspout' that destroyed thousands of birds on Green and Chappell Islands (*Church News* 1 December 1891: 562; June 1892: 681). Such a phenomenon has never been described since, but what Montgomery reported could have been very heavy localised rain or a tornado.

Montgomery was to learn that every season was different (Table 9). The success of each season can be graphically illustrated by scaling the quotes in Table 9 from 1 (exceedingly scarce) to 5 (exceptionally good). The results shown in Figure 9 suggest that 'exceptionally good' or 'very successful' seasons appear to have occurred in the 1890s and early 1900s every three years. Later on, the descriptions became more muted, either because the seasons were only average, or because the newspaper correspondents of the day tempered their comments. On the whole, the majority of seasons were 'successful', and adequate returns were probably obtained to enable the muttonbirder to survive and pay his bills until the following year.

Babel Island, the largest rookery in the Furneaux Group, was virtually untouched. Two families attempted to work it in 1891 but the snakes were said to be so abundant that even the Aborigines were deterred (Montgomery 1891: 6). However, it is more likely that its remoteness, the expense of transport there and erecting sheds, and the lack of incentive to move from Chappell Island were the reasons that few people went there before the early 1900s. Chappell Island however, was too small to contain all the Aborigines and non-Aborigines who wished to go muttonbirding, and this eventually compelled some Aborigines to go onto Babel Island. To get there they relied on commercial steamers,

and disposed of their birds to merchants who bought for unreasonably low prices that the Aborigines had no option but to accept.

Table 9. Description of Muttonbird Seasons, 1875-1928.

Year	Description	Source
1875	unusually good season	<i>Examiner</i> 13.4.1875
1881	birds are very scarce	<i>Examiner</i> 26.3.1881
1891	poor season	<i>Ch. News</i> Dec 1891
1892	exceptionally good	<i>Examiner</i> 31.5.1892
1893	birds not over plentiful	<i>Examiner</i> 10.5.1893
1894	very good season	<i>Examiner</i> 11.5.1894
1895	best for years	<i>Examiner</i> 27.5.1895
1896	anything but a payable season	<i>Examiner</i> 26.5.1896
1897	successful	<i>Examiner</i> 24.5.1897
1898	best season for years	<i>Examiner</i> 30.4.1898
1899	shortage this year	<i>Examiner</i> 17.4.1899
1900	very successful	<i>Examiner</i> 2.6.1900
1901	very good one	<i>Examiner</i> 6.5.1901
1902	a poor one	<i>Examiner</i> 8.5.1902
1903	a most successful one	<i>Examiner</i> 25.4.1903
1904	exceedingly scarce	<i>Examiner</i> 19.4.1904
1905	so far been a splendid one	<i>Examiner</i> 7.4.1905
1906	not so remunerative as the last	<i>Examiner</i> 3.4.1906
1907	birds are of first rate quality	<i>Examiner</i> 8.4.1907
1908	splendid quality, though not so numerous	<i>Examiner</i> 23.3.1908
1909	successful year, except on Chappell	<i>Examiner</i> 23.4.1909
1910	likely to be in every way successful	<i>Examiner</i> 4.4.1910
1912	very marked decrease due to rains	<i>Examiner</i> 22.4.1912
1913	less than half the usual quantity	<i>Examiner</i> 17.4.1913
1914	a good one	<i>Examiner</i> 5.5.1914
1915	every appearance of a fairly good catch	<i>Examiner</i> 23.3.1915
1916	scarcity of birds	<i>Examiner</i> 3.4.1916
1917	likely to prove a very poor one	<i>Examiner</i> 27.4.1917
1918	birds being of splendid quality	<i>Examiner</i> 23.4.1918
1919	sheds at Lady Barron in full swing	<i>Examiner</i> 11.4.1919
1920	numbers down, but quality high	<i>Examiner</i> 16.4.1920
1921	prolific season	<i>Examiner</i> 12.3.1921
1922	million birds expected from Furn. Gr.	<i>Examiner</i> 29.4.1922
1924	not so prolific as the previous one	<i>Examiner</i> 29.3.1924
1925	output greater than last year	<i>Examiner</i> 9.5.1925
1928	good year as birds are plentiful	<i>Examiner</i> 20.3.1928

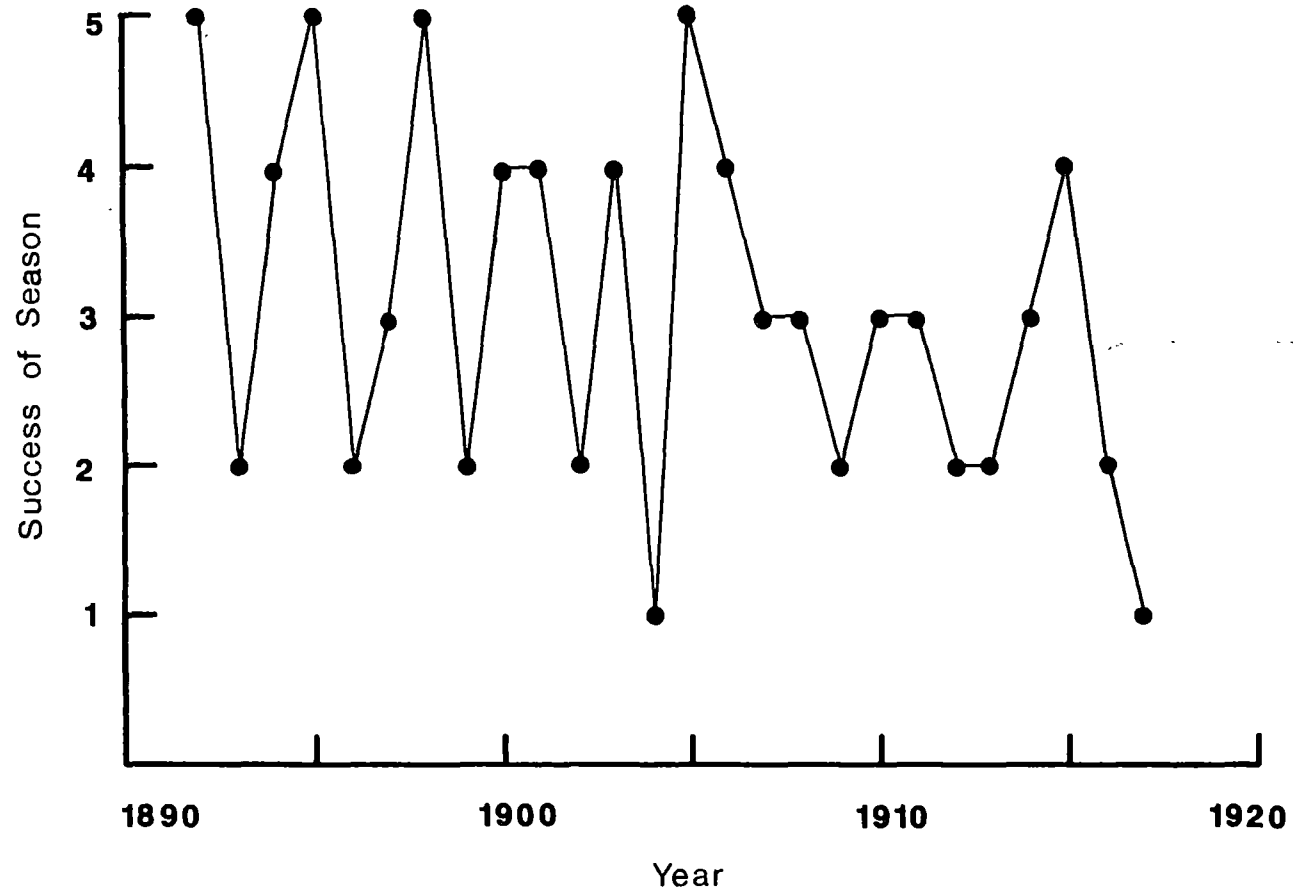


Figure 9. Annual muttonbird seasons from 1892-1917. Scale: 1, exceptionally poor season; 2, below average; 3, average; 4, above average; 5, exceptionally good.

Montgomery's enthusiasm for muttonbirds, together with his ideas on muttonbirding gleaned from annual visits of very short duration, resulted in the enacting of the first regulations governing the harvest of muttonbirds. The advice the government initially received from Montgomery was given after his consultations with the Aborigines. Montgomery believed that stock were destroying the islands and wondered whether the islands were for the birds or stock. This question had been posed earlier by a visiting surveyor who suggested that the "...necessity for protecting the mutton-birds that frequent these islands — is deserving of the special attention of Parliament" (TPP 1890. Number 66: 4). In 1888 the Minister for Lands had directed the Surveyor-General to post notices in conspicuous places on the islands in the Strait to stop the destruction of muttonbirds (AOT LSD 16/71/205).

But stronger action than this was needed. Montgomery realised the necessity for some regulation of the muttonbird industry, and he therefore recommended that there be a closed time when access to the islands was forbidden, that egging be banned except for consumption on the spot, that a specific season be set, and that oiling be prohibited (*Church News* 1 December 1891: 563; Montgomery 1891: 7-9). His most significant recommendation, that the government resume land it had sold less than 20 years previously, was not taken up. Montgomery's recommendations added weight (though it is not clear whether his advice was pivotal) to the government's decision in December 1891 to gazette regulations that reserved Babel, Store, Forsyth, Chappell, and Little Green Islands as hunting grounds for muttonbirds (*Hobart Gazette* 15 December 1891: 2449). A season date was set from 20 March to 20 May; adult birds and eggs were allowed to be killed or taken, but for consumption only on the spot; fires were only permitted from 21 May to 10 September which was the period when muttonbirds were absent; and no domestic animals except dogs on chains were allowed upon crown lands reserved as muttonbird hunting grounds. These regulations were the first attempt to bring order and some measure of conservation to the harvesting of muttonbirds. The government congratulated itself for bringing in the regulations, the Minister for Lands stating in Parliament:

Care must always be exercised for the proper preservation of all rookeries or breeding grounds for these birds, beyond which it only requires that they should be let alone during the season of laying and incubation [Applause] (Hartnoll 1892: 5).

The main products were salted chicks, oil, fat and feathers. Eggs were still collected from Chappell Island (Plate 9), and said to sell for 10d to 1/- per dozen in Launceston

(Campbell 1900: 886). Their collection was confined to a few days, with people setting up temporary abode in make-shift sheds which were thatched with tussock grass, while others camped under the lee side of boulders with boat sails converted into tents (Campbell 1900: 884). In 1892, oiling and fattening of young fledglings was prohibited and only the entrails and skins of older fledglings reduced (*Examiner* 26 April 1892). The taking and selling of eggs was prohibited in 1896 although eggs were allowed to be consumed on the spot, which led to some discussion of where the 'spot' was (*Examiner* 4 February 1896). The exploitation of adult birds for meat and feathers had ceased, although they were still captured for food (*Examiner* 26 April 1892). The fact that breeding birds were vital to the future of the industry had been recognised and it was accepted by the late 1890s that it was improper to catch them, though it was not until 1976 that the killing of adult muttonbirds was prohibited under the National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1970. Contemporary muttonbirders talk of a tradition of catching an adult bird and baking it in a recipe called 'old seabird pie' once each season (Phyllis Pitchford interview).

On his second visit one year later (in 1892), the Aborigines congratulated Montgomery over the muttonbird regulations and expressed "deep thanks to the government for taking so practical an interest in the half-castes" (*Church News* 1 March 1892: 614). Montgomery soon learned, however, that the Aborigines themselves disregarded regulations if it suited them, although they had petitioned for their introduction. He was depressed by stories that chicks were being taken for fattening only, but continued to present the case for more control of the muttonbird season. In particular he tried often to impress upon the Aborigines that they should open up Babel Island despite the snakes. Chappell Island, the principal muttonbird rookery for all the Aborigines and some of the non-Aboriginal settlers, was crowded and deteriorating. Spear grass was spreading, changing the habitat, and fewer birds were thus breeding. Montgomery advocated licence fees for Chappell Island but not for the other islands. Nothing came from these recommendations until 1897, when regulations were gazetted allowing muttonbirds to be taken for food only, and not for fat or oil (*Hobart Gazette* 7 December 1897: 2349). His remedy for reducing the number of snakes was to release the large iguana lizard and cats. Where the iguanas were supposed to come from and what Montgomery was going to do with them he never stated, though he thought the cats could be re-caught and removed so that they did not eat the muttonbirds.

But moving to Babel Island cost money which the Aborigines lacked. It meant constructing sheds, and a hazardous boat trip around the southeast corner of Flinders Island through a system of moving sandy shoals in shallow water known as the Pot Boil.

The majority of boats owned by the Aborigines were not up to such a voyage which could only be safely attempted in larger vessels. There was also nothing to prevent more highly capitalised non-Aboriginal shed owners employing large crews to the detriment of the small family operations. Men were coming from mainland Tasmania to go muttonbirding. In March 1896 Montgomery had to share the steamer with eleven of them, which he found very difficult (*Church News* 1 April 1896: 446).

In 1894 the muttonbirders reported that muttonbirds were very plentiful although the prices were very low (*Church News* 1 August 1894: 123). At this time the importance of muttonbirding to all settlers in the Furneaux Group, including non-Aborigines, cannot be over-emphasised. Their survival depended on the income it provided. In the 1890s Australia was in depression. To the inhabitants of the Furneaux Group this meant "no money in circulation and a good season of muttonbirds means little more cash passing from one to another" (*Examiner* 27 March 1895). Life was difficult. One settler on Flinders Island was so badly off that he remarked that "he had not had any sugar in his tea for over one month and no money to buy any with" (*Examiner* 11 February 1896). Due to the depression of the 1890s the expected development of Flinders Island after the initial land rush in 1889 did not eventuate, and economic expansion of the Furneaux Group stagnated. Muttonbirding was the principal resource that the old and new settlers depended on to keep them solvent. After a good season of large birds in 1895 prices recovered to 9/- and 10/- per 100 birds (*Church News* 1 October 1895: 351). They remained at these prices for several years, and in 1898 were retailing in Launceston shops at six for 1/- (*Examiner* 1 April 1898). In June of the following year, the price was 14/- per 100 birds, or 2d each retail.

While he was in Tasmania, Montgomery espoused his views about muttonbirding through the Royal Society of Tasmania, of which he was an active member. In response to a series of talks and discussions with Society members, the government periodically gazetted new regulations which brought the catching of muttonbirds under further control (Montgomery 1896: xvi; 1897: vii; *Hobart Gazette* 7 December 1897: 2349; 9 October 1900: 1595). Montgomery's continuing concerns were to restrict the number of muttonbirders permitted to come to the islands from Launceston and other places, and to entice the younger people, particularly the Aborigines to try Babel Island. His pleas went unheeded (*Church News* 3 October 1898: 927). Eventually the situation changed, but not before Montgomery left Tasmania in 1901; by 1908, there were 78 people on Babel Island compared to 155 on Chappell Island (TPP 1908. Number 57: 3). Steamers such as the *Linda* and *Warrentinna* were making the trip to Babel Island, providing a sometimes rough but safe trip for the passengers.

Montgomery's achievement was to keep the issue of the conservation of muttonbirds before the government. The Aborigines whom he tried to help, praised and abused him simultaneously over his efforts on behalf of the industry. Their only aim was to continue doing what they had always done and they were prepared to put up with problems such as grazing. There was nothing they could do without outside assistance, and furthermore, grazing occurred on freehold land over which the government had no control. If Montgomery or someone else wished to confront any issue they were happy enough, but it was of little concern to them. Muttonbird licences were issued as a result of Montgomery's intervention, but so, too, were new grazing rights on Chappell Island, even though grazing was destroying the muttonbirds (*Argus* 23 January 1909). Grazing continued to be a perpetual problem on the muttonbird islands until very recently, for no-one was prepared to confront the issue and provide a solution.

SUMMARY

The taking of muttonbirds for economic purposes commenced in the Furneaux Group when the number of seals became so depleted that hunting them was uneconomic for the sealers who were in process of settling permanently on the islands. The muttonbird rookeries were extensive, and covered most of the islands on which they occurred. The largest was Babel Island with some 3,500,000 burrows. Several islands which the sealers selected for settlement also had muttonbird rookeries. Within a short period those birds were exterminated through permanent changes in habitat brought about by fire and domestic stock.

Initially, muttonbirds were exploited from September through to April. Adult birds were captured for their feathers, eggs were collected and chicks were taken for their oil and fat, and their meat for human consumption. Muttonbirds survived this ruthless exploitation only because of their great abundance, the fact that the human population of the Furneaux Group was small, and because the market for feathers collapsed, thereby reducing the demand for the taking of the adult breeders.

The main muttonbirding island was Chappell Island. It was central to the other inhabited islands, while its area of 300 ha was large enough to accommodate the increasing population of Aborigines. The annual catch for the Group was about 200,000 to 300,000 birds while 2,000 gallons of oil and fat were collected as by-products. The people built small, rough shelters to live in and processed the birds outside. Towards the end of the nineteenth century permanent processing sheds were erected alongside the

living quarters as the industry was established as an important permanent fixture in the local economy.

In the second half of the century, Church of England missionaries became involved in the affairs of the Islanders. Over-exploitation and damage to rookeries by stock were major concerns and, to safeguard the birds, the first regulations governing the industry were introduced in 1891. Throughout the 1890s, Bishop Montgomery pushed for more regulations, and by the time he left Tasmania in 1901 the muttonbird industry was well regulated, although the problem of stock versus muttonbirding was not resolved.

CHAPTER 8

THE MUTTONBIRD INDUSTRY, 1900-1928

Many people appear to think that the mutton-birds are caught only by half-castes with big, bushy whiskers, and by elderly ladies whose hair is not kept up in the latest style. This is not the case, as I find that tens of thousands of birds are caught, dressed and preserved by the hands of beautiful women, young men, and maidens (Examiner 27 February 1914).

From the turn of the century to 1928, when the Animals and Birds Protection Act was proclaimed, the muttonbird industry reached its peak with the largest proportion of the total population of the Furneaux Group engaged in the industry. In this period hygiene and tighter controls during processing were impressed upon the industry.

After Montgomery, the Church of England pastors who visited the islands showed little interest in muttonbirds. For example, in the early 1900s, The Reverend Martin who was popular with the Aborigines, did not regard eating muttonbirds to be part of his pastoral duties (Lawrence: Martin, unpublished manuscript). The Church completely lost its influence as control of the industry became the full responsibility of the government through the Lands and Survey Department. The number of people muttonbirding increased each season, and for many years, as late as the 1920s, the news from the Furneaux Group published in newspapers and journal articles regularly featured muttonbirding. By 1903, the government was issuing licences to take muttonbirds. In 1908 a total of 177 licences were issued which, compared to a total population of about 500, meant that a significant number of the inhabitants were involved in muttonbirding.

Each year a feeling of excitement gripped the locals as the muttonbird season drew near, to be replaced by quiet and lassitude when it finished and everyone returned home. Thus Captain Dargaville of the *Linda* could write that "the muttonbird season is causing a stir

amongst the Islanders, and on the next trip of the vessel the first shipment for this market will be ready" (*Examiner* 23 March 1897). After the season, the newspapers noted that "matters at the islands are very quiet", and that "unadorned quiescence" seemed to be the state of the islands until next season (*Examiner* 3 June 1903; 29 January 1902). Muttonbirding even controlled the date for municipal elections, which were never held on the fourth Thursday in April as prescribed by Part V, Section 54 of the Local Government Act, 1906, as people were away muttonbirding on that day. For state elections, ballot boxes were taken to the rookeries (*Examiner* 17 June 1909, 29 May 1919).

As the population of Flinders Island increased, the importance of the muttonbird industry was maintained in the early twentieth century. Many new settlers found that muttonbirding and not farming was their principal income. One correspondent noted that "most of us are still dependent upon what we earn collecting the wily petrel to pay the instalments on land purchased from the Crown" (*Examiner* 18 February 1907). The season provided employment for the majority of settlers. The end of the summer was usually a dry period on Flinders Island so tin mining which required ample water ceased and there was little stock work. Dairy cattle were dried off enabling settlers to go muttonbirding.

MUTTONBIRDING FROM 1900 to 1910

Preparations for the season would begin in February after social events such as the New Year sports carnival on Cape Barren Island had passed. Firewood was cut ready for boating to the islands, huts and sheds were repaired, and casks were cleaned and put in order. Tins of paint to mark details on casks were obtained through the local stores. By March, activity was feverish and opinions were given of the likely outcome of the season:

At present all connected with muttonbirding are up to their eyes in work, boating wood, water, casks etc. for the coming season, which starts on 24 March. Young birds are not nearly as plentiful as in previous years, but what are in are said to be very large (*Examiner* 10 March 1896).

Often the opinions were inaccurate but fortunately they did not influence people's intentions to go muttonbirding. A week or so before the season commenced, boats were conveying parties of muttonbirders to the outermost muttonbird islands. In 1900 37 families went muttonbirding on Chappell Island (*Examiner* 22 March 1900), while 3

parties of muttonbirders, probably numbering some 20 people, were on Babel Island by mid-March (*Examiner* 13 March 1900). However, by 1903 the number of passengers on the *Linda* alone for Babel Island from Whitemark was approximately 40 (*Examiner* 12 March 1903). A small number of muttonbirders were still being recruited from Launceston. In 1903 the locals were said to be "boiling with interest and excitement" as the *Linda* was expected in with muttonbirders from Launceston who had not yet bought their licence, which had to be purchased by a certain date (*Examiner* 23 March 1903). The locals feared that they would be too late and have to return to Launceston, thus leaving a shortage of labour on the islands. It seems that the concern was unnecessary as the licence problem was sorted out.

In the early 1900s between 300 and 350 people (including children) were directly involved in muttonbirding. This was 60 percent of the total population of the Furneaux Group. Chappell Island was still the principal rookery but the perennial complaint of pasturing stock on the island and degrading the rookery was discouraging to muttonbirders, particularly to Aborigines (*Examiner* 22 July 1902, 27 May 1903, 20 March 1907; TPP 1908. Number 57: 2, 3). The Aborigines living on Cape Barren Island were not agriculturalists. Almost without exception they were dependent on muttonbirding to survive from year to year. In 1908 155 persons, of whom 110 were Aborigines, went muttonbirding on Chappell Island. In 1909 the season was pronounced "a successful year", except on Chappell Island where families who used to obtain 800 birds a day were very lucky to get 400 (*Examiner* 23 April 1909). The grazing problem was never solved to the satisfaction of muttonbirders. Instead, the number of muttonbirders on Chappell Island continued to decrease, and by 1922 there were only 19 families muttonbirding there compared to 24 families on Babel Island (*Examiner* 22 March 1922).

On the other islands there were in 1907, 27 people on Great Dog and 33 on Little Dog Islands, and in 1908, 78 on Babel and 39 on Little Green Islands. Great Dog and Little Dog Islands were partly leased and partly privately owned respectively, and were worked by non-Aboriginals who employed Aborigines. Licences to take muttonbirds were introduced for the 1903 season under an amendment to the Game Protection Act, 1895. In 1907 193 licences were sold (Table 10). In the following three years the number sold decreased steadily to 153 in 1910. It is not clear whether the decrease was because people stopped buying licences, as the number of muttonbirds caught remained similar for the next 10 to 20 years. The majority of the licences were issued to the Aborigines who constituted the majority of muttonbirders, although they numbered less than 20 percent of the population in the Furneaux Group in the early 1900s. Muttonbirding was

a collective occupation and Cape Barren Island became deserted when the season approached. The licence figures reveal the great importance that muttonbirding held for the people, because for many it was their only source of income, 75 percent of the Aborigines living on Cape Barren Island deeming their main occupation to be hunters.

Robert Gardner still leased Great Dog Island, and 1907 was the first time for many years that the island was fully worked (TPP 1908. Number 57: 2). It was also asserted that the rookeries on the islands were not nearly so good nor birds so plentiful as in the past. The passing of the Game Protection Act, 1907 made it unlawful to take or destroy the eggs of muttonbirds, while a licence was required to kill, take or capture a muttonbird. These regulations were attempts to preserve the bird population which appeared to be diminishing. The pasturing of stock which damaged burrows and resulted in loss of habitat was blamed rather than over-exploitation (TPP 1908. Number 57: 2). As Constable Archer was absent from the islands, the Flinders Island Council Clerk was sworn in as a special constable for Chappell Island to protect the rookery during the egg-laying period (FIC Minutes, 6 December 1908).

Table 10. Number of Muttonbird Licences issued, 1907-1919.

Year	1907	1908	1909	1910	1911	1912	1913	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918	1919
Licences sold	193	177	163	153	131	109	92	111	136	138	157	177	143

(Source: Lands and Surveys Department Annual Reports)

The Council Clerk remained on the island for seven days from 23-30 November. No one came ashore, but he noted about 20 sheep straying over the rookery. The same clerk was reappointed the following year, and in November 1911 a similar request was made to the Commissioner of Police (FIC Minutes, 6 October 1910, 2 November 1911).

Season Details

In the early 1900s the number of birds caught steadily increased as more people participated in muttonbirding. The Police Commissioner, J. E. C. Lord, stated in his report that he had traced the number of muttonbirds sent to Launceston merchants to be

379,804 in 1904; 459,094 in 1905; 493,777 in 1906; 572,671 in 1907; and 636,592 in 1908 (TPP 1908. Number 57: 3). He considered it unlikely that he had managed to trace all the shipments, and estimated the total catch for 1908 to be between 1,000,000 and 1,030,000 birds (TPP 1908. Number 57: 5), packed in about 2,500 casks. The price obtained for the birds increased from 10/- per 100 in 1902 to 14/- per 100 in 1904, which was described as a "bad year" due to heavy rains (Littler 1910: 167). The total value of birds, feathers, oil and fat in 1904 was £3,885 (Littler 1910: 167). Retail prices were 8 birds per 1/- at the start of the season when birds were scarce. There was no difficulty in disposing of them as many were sold in the mining settlements of Tasmania, most of which were on the West Coast with a population of about 15,000 people, with others scattered throughout the state. In 1908 the total value was over £6,000 in a season described as "splendid" (Table 9). The following year, 1909, the price of muttonbirds was 12/6 per 100 birds, a large fall when compared with 14/- per 100 birds obtained in 1886. Birds carried over from the previous season sold several shillings cheaper than the new season's produce. Despite the very large catches in this period, there is no evidence that people were better off. Although land was continually being sold on Flinders Island, the problem of living and social conditions for Aborigines on Cape Barren Island had not been addressed by the government. Hunting of wallaby and muttonbirding was still the main occupation of males on Cape Barren Island.

Steamers, ketches and cutters constantly transported passengers, muttonbirds and the feathers, fat and oil by-products between the islands and Launceston. The trip took twelve to fourteen hours, and the turn-round was usually accomplished within two to three days. The *Linda*, which was the main trading vessel on the run, made up to five return-trips from the islands with muttonbirds, moving as many as 750 casks during the season. It had a capacity of approximately 300 casks of muttonbirds and 50 bales of feathers in the one load. Each cask could contain between 400 and 600 muttonbirds packed in brine, a total weight of up to 200 kg. The work of loading them from the muttonbird sheds to the trading vessels was physically hard and tiring. The men rolled the barrels down the beach, then had to lift or roll them into a small boat which took two or three at a time back to the ship. During this procedure the men stood up to their waists in cold water. Often the trader could not take any barrels on board due to heavy surf (Barrett Account Book Volume 2, Barrett to C. H. Smith and Co., 10 April 1908). Once the barrels were loaded, there was also no guarantee that the ship could leave the island as it was often weather bound a week and more. The same occurred with ferrying passengers and goods to the muttonbird islands. These interruptions frequently made consignments late for the market. Casks were often left at the sheds on the exposed west

side of Chappell Island as late as June waiting for the weather to settle (*Examiner* 8 June 1903).

In addition to the *Linda* over fifteen boats were involved in the muttonbird trade in the early 1900s (*Examiner* 1900-10, *Shipping Intelligence* reports). They included the cutters *Arrow*, *Coogee*, *Hurricane*, *Irene*, *Olive Maud*, *Pearl*, and the *Syren*; and the ketches *Dauntless*, *Dawn*, *E. H. Purden*, *Gladys*, *H.J.H.*, *Hazard*, *Heather Belle*, *Helen Moore*, *Linda* and *Wave*. The cutters were mainly owned by local island residents while the larger ketches belonged to Tasmanian mainland based shipping companies. The cutters were limited to about 65 casks of muttonbirds whereas the larger ketches could carry up to 400 casks of muttonbirds and 50 bales of feathers. By 1909 the cutters had largely left the muttonbird trade as the ketches took over. Their disappearance was largely due to the loss of nautical skills by the island residents, and the growth in population which necessitated larger boats to carry the increasing volume of cargo.

Babel Island was unusual in that it was joined to the mainland by a sandy spit. It could be crossed at low tide without much danger to humans, but boats were still required to carry cargo to and from the island. The spit was occasionally washed away and rebuilt in intervals of many years. According to Bill Riddle who first went to Babel Island as a six year old child in 1900:

The spit was washed away when the sea, the sea was last in 1899. It remained like that, the water went through it for years and years then gradually it built up from each end and tussock grass grew on it, and all that kind of stuff. You could walk backwards and forwards. Then it washed away again you see, probably about the 40s or 30s (Bill Riddle interview).

This pathway was often used by people who wished to leave before the season finished or to purchase further supplies using well-worn tracks through the scrub to Lady Barron. In the 1916 season the spit was partially exposed, and the sea between Flinders and Babel Islands remained fordable until the 1950s. Nowadays the remains of tree stumps are scattered throughout the sand showing where the spit once existed.

During the early years of settlement, the islands of the Furneaux Group were particularly attractive to naturalists and professional people. Photography on Cape Barren Island, and a visit to the Cat Island gannetry were particularly favoured. In 1908 Henry Baker, the Agent-General for the United States of America, paid a visit. He expressed his

concern at the vast amount of illegal egging, encroachment of stock onto rookeries, and the destruction of wallabies at a meeting of the Royal Society of Tasmania (Baker 1908: vii; *Examiner* 17 June 1908). The Society resolved to write to the government asking for an inquiry into regulations on muttonbirding and the wholesale slaughter of wallaby and kangaroo. The government had already legislated against egging, but could not police its laws as there was only one policeman stationed in the Furneaux Group.

Thomas Barrett's Store on Long Island

By 1903 there were four stores in the Furneaux Group, but the main supplier was still Thomas Barrett on Long Island who bought his stock from a number of Launceston merchants. Barrett had resided for 30 to 40 years in the Furneaux Group where he owned and leased land on several islands, including Chappell and Cape Barren Islands. In his store account books, he recorded business transactions made on behalf of himself and others. On 16 June 1906, 127 sheep were landed on Chappell Island from the *Shamrock*. Barrett then owned 50 acres on the island (he also owned the *Shamrock*). He operated a small shed on Chappell Island obtaining 3,000 to 5,000 muttonbirds each season, several bales and bags of feathers, approximately a dozen casks of fat, and 1 to 2 casks of oil. He also acted as agent for other muttonbirders, particularly the Aborigines who were his most frequent customers as they lived at The Corner, only 1 km away across the water.

As the owner of the only store in the Furneaux group for many years, Thomas Barrett was able to sell whatever the Aborigines required, and he appears to have done so without any moral scruples. Barrett sold alcohol freely, and in so doing he was responsible for getting the Aborigines into debt from which they could only extract themselves by mortgaging the income received from the sale of muttonbirds and their by-products. As an example, the semi-literate Thomas Mansell owed £36/7/9 from a total of £56/5/9 he received through muttonbirding and working for Charles Harley (AOT CSD 10/6/89[6]). Mansell and other Aborigines who were in the same situation paid their debts off yearly at the conclusion of the muttonbird season. The Aborigines had probably been exploited from the time Barrett first opened his store about 1877. There was little they could do as they had no ready cash and were constantly under severe economic pressure. The barter system always operated in favour of the trader.

The alcohol included cases of 'Boags' bottled ale, and whisky, gin and rum by the gallon. It came from James Walden of Launceston who bought from Barrett, seal skins, oil and fat that the Aborigines obtained on their irregular seal hunting forays in Bass

Strait. Walden also supplied him with "dark cheap" material to make "little boys trousers" which Barrett qualified by saying that it was "not for our own use" (Barrett Account Book Volume 1, Barrett to Walden, 9 December 1907). Grocery items were bought from Launceston by the case or bag. They included condensed milk, butter, golden syrup, jam, sugar, flour, soap, plugs of tobacco, vegetables and other essential items including fruit. Aborigines often asked him for loans, but he always refused. On one occasion, an Aborigine who owed Barrett money, and who also had an interest in the cutter the *Olive Maud*, paid off part of his bill when Barrett asked James Walden to give "young Phillip Thomas" an order for the freight of salt and casks ordered by Barrett worth £2 (Barrett Account Book Volume 2, Barrett to Walden, 11 January 1909). Some Aborigines did not pay their bills so Barrett advised his Launceston lawyers to issue warrants through the local bailiff, Constable Archer (Barrett Account Book Volume 3, Barrett to Miller and Miller, 9 February 1911). Usually there were no goods of value to seize until the Aborigines came back with casks of birds after the muttonbird season. The issuing of warrants was enough to frighten the debtors into settling their accounts with Barrett, by allowing him to take muttonbirds to the value of their debt.

In getting outfitted for the forthcoming season muttonbirders ordered groceries, casks, salt and other essential items from their local store. Casks were forwarded to the Launceston merchants, G. Harrap and C. H. Smith and Co. Barrett asked Harrap to get the "best price they could for the birds", and in return, to "back-ship" items such as bags of vegetables (Barrett Account Book Volume 1, Barrett to Harrap, 10 July 1906). To C. H. Smith and Co. he shipped casks of birds and fat, and requested that his credit be banked (Barrett Account Book Volume 1, Barrett to C. H. Smith and Co., 3 December 1907). Occasionally C. H. Smith and Co. sent casks containing bad birds back to Barrett. Once when this happened, Barrett inspected all the 32 casks and wrote back:

I examined all the casks and among them found five casks containing full number of firm fresh beautiful birds solid & as good as any I have ever seen not-tainted & no smell & the owners of these casks are greatly dismayed about it they cannot understand why you should have returned the good birds with the bad (Barrett Account Book Volume 1, Barrett to C. H. Smith and Co., 3 December 1907).

Barrett said that the muttonbirders blamed bad birds on the 'Pig' brand of salt that C. H. Smith and Co. sold them. In placing an order for five tons of 'Castles' coarse salt, Barrett requested that the 'Pig' brand or any other inferior brand be not sent. He also remarked that his casks were good and sound, but he noticed that there were "a lot of

very bad casks belonging to other people". The return of bad casks by C. H. Smith and Co. was a regular occurrence each muttonbird season. As other people's casks were often shipped through Thomas Barrett, he voiced their complaints to the company that no other Launceston merchant seemed to have any problem with the birds. It got to the stage that the muttonbirders considered sending their birds to other buyers (Barrett Account Book Volume 1, Barrett to C. H. Smith and Co., 4 April 1908). Barrett continually admonished the Launceston company, saying its storeman "should be ashamed of himself" for sending the "good" birds back to the islands while exporting the "bad" birds to New Zealand (Barrett Account Book Volume 2, Barrett to C. H. Smith and Co., 10 April 1908). Barrett was docked £18 for 'bad' birds shipped there, notwithstanding his protests that it was not his fault, that it was impossible to know whose birds they were now and who packed them, and asking how could he ever recover the money. Despite feeling that he was being discriminated against, Barrett continued to deal with C. H. Smith and Co., obtaining from them general goods, as well as casks, hoop iron to repair casks, and paint to mark on each cask the owner's initials and the number of birds contained within. The shortage of casks was a constant problem. Frequently, consignments of birds, fat and oil from the islands did not arrive in Launceston until May or June because of the shortage.

In 1912 Barrett passed on his interest in Long Island to his sons, William and Victor, who did not want to take on the storekeeping business. Although they went muttonbirding, the sons sent to Launceston only their own birds, and did not act as agents for other people (Barrett Account Book Volume 5, Barrett to C. H. Smith and Co., 11 October 1912). By this time Whitemark had become the main town in the Furneaux Group with a jetty, shop and hotel, and the stores on the outer islands were losing their importance as Whitemark became established. Exploitation of muttonbirders did not cease, for the other store keepers were not in the business of providing welfare services.

MUTTONBIRDING FROM 1910 to 1915

Between the census years of 1911 and 1921 the population of Flinders Island increased from 616 to 905, with 105,000 acres of land sold in the second land boom of 1911 alone. The new settlers viewed the muttonbird industry as a means of making money to pay for their land purchases and development. To help them, they brought in outside labour, a practice that had been carried on for some years. This practice, together with the continued pasturing of stock on muttonbird islands, upset the Aborigines. During the vice-regal visit of Governor Barron to Cape Barren Island in January 1911 the Premier,

Sir Elliot Lewis who accompanied him was asked to prevent occupational licences being granted on muttonbirding islands, and to issue muttonbird licences only to bona-fide residents of twelve months or more in the Furneaux Group (*Examiner* 12 January 1911). There were about 28 families and 40 single men on Cape Barren Island. Well before the vice-regal visit, the government had circulated new draft regulations which took these views into account. The Flinders Island Council had previously commented on them, and suggested to the Premier that the season begin on the 22nd of March instead of the 24th, that the twelve months residency rule and the ban on the use of artificial lights for catching muttonbirds at night be removed, and that a royalty of not more than 2/- per 1,000 birds be charged instead of a licence fee (FIC Minutes, 2 June 1910). The draft regulations were changed to include a non-residency compliance but the others remained.

The seasons continued to vary considerably. In 1911 at least six of the sheds were closed due to a lack of birds, resulting in a shortfall on the market of about 70,000 muttonbirds (Barrett Account Book Volume 3, Barrett to C. H. Smith and Co., 10 March 1911). A price of 9/- per 100 birds was offered to Thomas Barrett, but he regarded this as too low because he was already paying the muttonbirders 8/- per 100 birds and supplying them with barrels and salt, while wages were up to 10/- per day. The price had to be put up. The influx of new settlers was not reflected in the sale of licences which continued to fall (Table 10).

Disease and Hygiene

Throughout the history of muttonbirding the risk of disease and accidents was always present (*Examiner* 26 June 1894; 4 April 1898; 19 April 1905; *Island News* 25 April 1958), but these were occupational hazards that most muttonbirders avoided. For many years after the typhoid epidemic of 1879 the muttonbird seasons were uneventful, until an infectious 'sickness' affected the inhabitants in 1913. A combination of so-called "four diseases" (Bill Riddle interview) struck Chappell, Great Dog and Flinders Islands during the muttonbird season. Medically diagnosed as "atypical measles with symptoms of scarlet fever" (TPP 1913. Number 33: 5), the ailment nevertheless seemed to have had the characteristics of a 'fourth disease'. Whatever it was, it greatly hindered work on the islands. Stores were closed and the shortage of labour for the muttonbird season reduced the annual catch to half the usual quantity (*Examiner* 17 April, 20 May 1913). By May the epidemic had subsided but the Virieux family suffered greatly, losing several members on Flinders and Chappell Islands. According to Leila Virieux, her father "...had one or two brothers and a sister that died from the disease that they had on Chappell Island many, many years ago" (Leila Virieux interview).

Muttonbirders on Chappell Island were the most seriously affected. The government medical officer who spent nine weeks attending the sick, attributed the outbreak to the poor living conditions on the island and lack of hygienic work practices. The huts were seriously overcrowded, lacked ventilation, and many people depended on water collected from hollows (the only other water was brought in casks from Flinders or Cape Barren Islands). The medical officer recommended that the huts "be kept in a more cleanly condition", and that muttonbird offal be either buried or disposed off in the sea (TPP 1913. Number 33: 6). This was similar to the recommendation made 35 years previously by Dr Vines (TPP.1879. Number 56: 5).

The lack of sanitary habits by muttonbirders was recognised by the Flinders Island Council. Four years previously it had suggested that the councillors residing on the different islands post notices stating that all refuse should be buried or thrown into the sea (FIC Minutes, 4 February 1909). Nothing eventuated until after the 1913 epidemic, when the Chief Health Officer recommended to the Council that they enact a by-law "to check the nuisances arising from the accumulation of offal during the dressing of mutton birds. Such by-law to take effect before the next season" (FIC Minutes, 7 June 1913). The living standards on the muttonbird island were very low. The huts were humpies because the people could not afford to construct better sheds which they only temporarily occupied. Regulations to upgrade living standards were not promulgated until several years later.

Hygiene in the meat processing industries was basic. In the same *Tasmanian Parliamentary Paper* that has been cited above, the Chief Health Officer for Tasmania, Dr S. A. McClintock, complained that butchers were not taking advantage of the fly-proof railway carriages provided by the Commissioner of Railways to convey meat from the abattoirs to the city of Hobart. They were still using horse and cart. With such conditions in the cities, there was little chance that hygiene would improve on the muttonbird islands. In 1912 regulations gazetted under the Public Health Act, 1903 securing the cleanliness and freedom from contamination of meat came into force (*Tasmanian Government Gazette* 12 November 1912: 2355-2356). This was the first public health Act to define offensive trades, appoint health officers and inspectors, and make it unlawful to establish any offensive trade without the consent in writing of a local authority. It also made provision under the bylaws for drainage, plumbing, rendering of foundations, water supply and disposal of offal. Muttonbirding could have been termed an offensive trade under the definition of 'slaughtering' in Schedule 1 of the Act. But the regulations did not affect the muttonbird industry until 1920, when a health inspector was

appointed to oversee the slaughter and packing of muttonbirds (*Examiner* 16 April 1920, 20 March 1923).

The Canning of Muttonbirds

Since the catching of muttonbirds commenced in the 1820s, salting had been the only way of preserving them on a large scale. There had been previous attempts at smoking birds, but the number delivered to the market in this condition was insignificant compared to the total catch (C. H. Smith and Co. Account Journals 1911). In March 1914 the government pig and poultry expert, R. J. Terry, made a special trip to the islands to view the industry and offer advice to James Irvine who had set up a small pilot canning plant at Lady Barron (*Examiner* 27 February, 7 April 1914). It was the first attempt to provide an alternative product to salted muttonbirds. Terry was unimpressed with the salting process for preserving muttonbirds, and found the taste objectionable. He considered that the packing of birds as tightly as possible in a barrel prevented the brine from circulating, and that this was the cause of the 'musty' taste of birds. He thought that the industry should be moving away from salted muttonbirds, to presenting them frozen or canned:

Ever since I tasted the first mutton-bird — and shall I ever forget it? — I have held the opinion that it was good food spoilt to a certain extent in preparation. I took the opportunity of viewing this industry, which is a far greater asset to a large number of people than many suppose, and I am - convinced that it can be developed into something much more valuable (*Examiner* 7 April 1914).

After some experimenting to get rid of the strong flavour, the new product was pronounced by journalists "tender and tasty, and eventually devoid of rankness or excess of oil. The article has a flavour of its own which is pleasant and it should command a ready and wide market on its merits" (*Examiner* 8 April 1914). At a later tasting session in Hobart, the opinion was that they were equal to tinned chicken or duckling (*Examiner* 13 April 1914). The sugar curing of muttonbirds was also tried that season, but the barrel sent to Hobart was tainted, as the lid had been badly broken and most of the solution had leaked out during transit.

MUTTONBIRDING FROM 1915 to 1928

The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 did not seem to affect the industry. The Aborigines of Cape Barren Island sent nineteen men to the war, six of whom did not return (CBI School Visitors Journal, 28 December 1918). The non-Aborigines also contributed their share of men to the war effort, and by the 1916 season there was a reputed shortage of labour on the islands, and a scarcity of birds on the rookeries (*Examiner* 3 April 1916, 14 May 1917). But in 1918 the number of licences sold again reached pre-1910 levels, with 177 licences taken out. This increase may have been due to the opening of Great Dog Island to more muttonbirders.

Upon the death of Robert Gardner in 1915, the lease to run stock on Great Dog Island was restricted to hard ground where no muttonbird burrows occurred, and given to a returned soldier, Marsey Barrett (FIC Correspondence Files, Minister for Lands to FIC Warden, 24 February 1920). The muttonbird rookery was divided up and advertised for lease among twelve shed owners, two of whom were returned soldiers (FIC Minutes, 8 January 1918; FIC Correspondence Files, Minister for Lands to FIC Clerk, 2 April 1921). The initial decision was to have only ten sheds, because, according to Constable Mansfield, the local crown land bailiff, one of the councillors had interests in several of the sheds (FIC Correspondence Files, 8 March 1921). But based on advice from Mansfield who said the island could hold more, the government increased the number of sheds by two. The annual rent of £100 was then shared between the shed owners, all of whom were non-Aboriginals (*Examiner* 22 March 1922).

Valentine Willis and Harold Holt, returned soldiers, each took one of the extra sheds (AOT LSD 1/462[2]). Like most of the other shed owners, Willis was not born on the islands:

He came down to the islands as a boy, he lived with foster-parents on Puncheon Head over by Cape Barren, and he went birding as a boy with other people. Then he went away to the war, and when he came back he got, they reserved two sites on Dog Island for returned soldiers, and he got one of them. I don't think my father had any other [income]. He didn't have a farm before we moved up here. I don't know that he did any other work apart from muttonbirding (Frank Willis interview).

On Babel Island the number of Aboriginal muttonbirders increased as they deserted Chappell Island, because of the continuing problems with stock and the abundance of

snakes. Snakes were also common on Babel Island, but were now not perceived to be a major problem there. The total number of birds caught probably increased only slightly because, although more birds were being taken off Babel and Great Dog Islands as the number of people on them increased, the number of birds taken off Chappell Island decreased. The annual total catch was thus probably between 1,000,000 and 1,200,000 birds in the years leading to the 1920s.

In 1919 a lack of shipping was stated to have caused a market shortage of at least 200,000 muttonbirds (*Examiner* 11 April, 12 May 1919). Aboriginal families arrived late or not at all on Babel and Chappell Islands that year. A record price resulted from the bird shortage, though the money probably did not end up in the pocket of the muttonbirders, but that of the storekeepers.

The passing through Parliament of the Animals and Birds Protection Act, 1919 repealed the Game Protection Act, 1907 and permitted more detailed regulations to conserve but still allow the taking of wildlife in Tasmania. The sections dealing with muttonbirds remained similar. The season was from 20 March to 20 May; licence fees were 10/- for every person under the age of twelve years, and 20/- for persons above that age; and no horses, neat cattle, sheep, pigs, or other animals were permitted upon any crown land reserved as hunting grounds for muttonbirds, except dogs which had to be kept chained (*Tasmanian Government Gazette* 3 February 1920: 281; 9 March 1920: 618; 23 March 1920: 693). The rookeries reserved were Babel, Chappell, Little Green and Rum Islands in the Furneaux Group, Steep Island in the Hunter Group, New Year Island near King Island, and the Actæon Islands in southern Tasmania. The important commercial rookeries on crown land on Great Dog and Little Dog Islands were omitted as they were held under lease (though there was freehold on Little Green and Babel Islands, the crown land on these two islands was not leased to anyone). Administration of the Act came under the responsibility of the police force through the authority of the Attorney-General. The government still showed its perennial interest in acquiring freehold whenever possible, particularly on Chappell Island, where the controversy regarding the grazing of stock continued. Thomas Barrett and Harold Walker, the two owners of freehold on Chappell Island, offered their blocks to the government for £375 and £500 respectively. The government considered these prices far too high and did not proceed to purchase (AOT LSD 1/462[1]).

The other major development in 1919 was the proposal to appoint a health inspector to review the industry. This news met with the approval of the majority of muttonbirders on the proviso that the "inspector should be very strict, and also have a thorough and

practical knowledge of the industry" (*Examiner* 12 May 1919). Forcing the muttonbird industry to comply with health regulations had been only a matter of time. The issue had been brought to a head by sickness and disease striking the muttonbirders due to insanitary work practices, and the frequent occurrence of badly preserved muttonbirds. As more than a third of the population was now employed in the muttonbird industry, which remained crucial to the economy of the Furneaux Group, the government asked the Flinders Island Council for its recommendations regarding the inspection of muttonbirds. The Council responded by submitting a list of regulations drawn up by the Council Clerk with a recommendation that an inspector be appointed (FIC Minutes, 5 April, 4 October 1919). Applications for a position to be appointed under the supervision of the Chief Health Officer for Tasmania were called and Marsey Barrett was appointed from the four people who applied, at a salary of £5 per week and £2 per week travel allowance for a period not exceeding two months (FIC Minutes, 6 March 1920; *Tasmanian Government Gazette* 2 March 1920: 563).

Marsey Barrett was joined by C. Colvin from the Department of Public Health in Hobart. Together they visited all the sheds and sent in a report to the Council regarding their state (*Examiner* 16 April 1920; FIC Minutes, 5 June 1920). The majority of sheds were of a reasonable standard but all processing sheds were required by the Chief Health Officer to have a concrete floor. Other requirements were the provision of fly-proof doors and ventilation openings, cooling racks, spouting and water tanks. The improvements were not welcomed: given that both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal muttonbirders lived close to the poverty line, the cost was a major imposition (FIC Minutes, 11 January 1922). Some did not carry out the work, but by the 1925 season the inspector reported a marked improvement in standards, although many of the sheds were roughly built (FIC Correspondence Files, Health Inspector's Mutton Bird Industry Report, 16 April 1925). He further remarked that the improvements had resulted in a cleaner produced bird and better living conditions for the employees.

The barrels also had to be clean. The type most favoured had a capacity of 40 to 50 gallons and held from 400 to 600 birds. They were not purpose-built for muttonbirds but previously contained spirit, wine and other liquor. Some casks were cleaned before being transported to the islands, but others required cleaning, either by charring the interior with lighted grass and then scraping until the bare wood was reached, or by scrubbing with hot water containing washing soda and then rinsing. First, though, it was common to retrieve the last drop of alcohol from the spirit casks by 'bullying' them:

Well, if you got a whisky cask, the penetration of the spirit into the wood, if you put four gallons of boiling water in that, plugged it up and rolled it around, you get quite an intoxicating drink. That's what we used to call 'bullying them'. There were plenty of stories of drunken orgies on the muttonbird islands from the 'bullying' of the spirit casks. But they were mainly forty gallons, the next one was down to about thirty gallons (Leedham Walker interview).

The inspectors had a set routine which involved inspecting the sheds and casks of birds and the disposal of offal and garbage, as already mentioned. Casks were marked with the packer's initials, the number of birds in the cask, and the year. They had to be airtight or the contents would become tainted. The salted birds would be further pickled by the addition of brine until the contents were soaked. This would prevent rotting and spoiling by maggots which were common problems, particularly during warm weather. After some years a routine developed with the inspector arming himself well:

Firstly, have a knowledge of the powers and provisions of the Food and Drugs Act and Regulations; then equip yourself with your statutory authority, note book, order book, indelible and coloured pencils, knife, electric torch, small quantity of Condry's crystals, a list of packing sheds, and a supply of food (AOT AA 612/22/3, Notes by H. Parker, health inspector for Department of Public Health, 8 October 1936).

Little escaped the inspector's eyes, and this led to some initial resentment. Ever since its inception, the muttonbird industry had never been subjected to any great change. What was being introduced were twentieth century ideas in building design and hygiene for both the workers and the production process of a commercial item. Eventually the inspections resulted in improved hygiene, but a watchful eye always had to be kept:

Observe whether garbage and offal have been disposed...examine the dwellings as to construction, cleanliness, and overcrowding. Examine drinking water, supply and containers...inspect sanitary conveniences and disposal of night-soil...inspect birding sheds, particularly noting maintenance, construction, if provided with impervious floors and satisfactory drainage, condition of lime-washed walls, if fly-proof materials are fixed over apertures in building. Next examine the casks...particular attention should be paid to the matter of infestation with

flies...note the defects, give verbal orders for the remedying of conditions, and later carry out a further inspection (op. cit).

On Flinders Island the canning factory continued to operate successfully, but Irvine himself sold out to new owners. In 1917 Harold Walker and Frank Keene, both of Flinders Island, became the owners of what was now the Bass Strait Preserving Company (DEP PF 2498, McKenzie to Minister for Lands, 30 April 1917). The factory was said to employ two men for every one employed by the muttonbirders, and to be the only one of its kind in Australia. Walker and Keene applied for the lease of all of Great Dog Island in order to can the island's annual production of birds. Their application was refused as the Minister did not want it under the control of one consortium. In 1922 the company was managed by Harry Lovett. Under his control the factory canned approximately 1,000 birds daily, which were brought over in the evening from the nearby islands for processing the following day. The factory worked six to seven weeks during the muttonbird season, then closed to reopen the following year. The product was sold entirely in Melbourne (FIC Correspondence Files, Chief Inspector of Factories to FIC Clerk, 1 May 1922; Department of Public Health Muttonbird Report, 16 April 1925).

In the 1922 season 67 families, approximately 350 to 400 people, went muttonbirding (*Examiner* 22 March 1922). This compares with the 1908 season when at least 332 people were on the muttonbird islands. The fifteen years between 1907 and 1922 saw the industry at its peak. Although the number of families on Chappell Island had decreased since the 1880s, overall the highest number of sheds were worked and the greatest number of Furneaux Group residents were employed in the industry. The muttonbird industry had reached its greatest prosperity. A land boom on Flinders Island in 1911 resulted in an influx of settlers and the population of the Furneaux Group increased from 616 in 1911 to 905 in 1921. Muttonbirding formed the economic base of the Bass Strait islands until the later development of farming and fishing. On Cape Barren Island, muttonbirding was still the major source of income for the year although social conditions were changing in the Reserve, now financed and run by the government. In official records, the occupation of the Aborigines began to be termed 'labourer' and not 'hunter' despite the continued dependence on muttonbirding. It was not until the 1930s that government jobs during the Great depression provided an alternative source of income. The names of the shed owners on the various islands as given in the *Examiner* 22 March 1922 were:

Little Dog Island: Henry Holt, W. Holt Sr., W. Holt Jr. and Jas. Holt.

Little Green Island: H. L. Barrett, William J. Barrett, Henry Bryant, George Dargaville, Alfred Davey, T. Davey and Thos. Lowry.

Great Dog Island: F. H. Barrett, J. E. Blundstone, Alfred Bryant, A. Cook, Geo. Davey, T. G. Gunter, H. J. Holloway, F. Holt, Jas. Robinson, H. J. Walker and V. Willis.

Chappell Island: J. Beeton, T. Beeton, W. B. Beeton, E. E. Brown, W. Brown, G. Burgess, J. Hinds, A. and N. Maynard, Ada Maynard, Emily Maynard, L. Maynard, G. Messner, Tasman Smith, Jean Virieux, Sarah Virieux, W. Virieux and R. Davey, and A. Withers.

Babel Island: C. W. Brown, Fanny Brown, H. W. Brown, R. Brown and J. Maynard, W. S. Brown, G. Burgess, J. Everett, H. Garrett, A. Mansell, Edward Mansell, F. Mansell, J. Mansell, J. P. Mansell, P. Mansell, W. Mansell, Albert Maynard, G. A. Maynard, J. Maynard, R. Maynard, E. Summers, John Thomas, S. Thomas and A. West.

Big Green Island: D. Bessell.

Pelican Island: S. Smallfield.

Between 1922 and 1928 the number of sheds decreased from 63 to 58, the loss occurring on Chappell Island (Appendix 2). Being the first island worked on a large-scale, many of the sheds there were older than those on other islands and probably not worth the effort of upgrading. The muttonbirders who left Chappell Island seem not to have moved to other islands, as there was no increase in the total number of sheds on the islands.

The shed owners tended to be associated with the same site for several years, although there were exceptions. On Great Dog Island sites remained in the same family for many years. Names of shed owners changed on Little Green Island in the 1920s, but it is not recorded whether this was due to changes in ownership or to sub-letting. Between 1922 and 1928, non-Aborigines owned 6 sites on Chappell Island and all the 22 sites on Little Green, Little Dog and Great Dog Islands. Aborigines owned 34 sites on Babel and

Chappell Islands. In 1922 and 1927 there was only one non-Aboriginal shed owner on Babel Island. In 1927 this was William Grey Holloway who, with his other two brothers, migrated from Victoria c. 1912. By 1928, 6 of the 24 shed sites were held by non-Aborigines, and in 1929, 7 of the 24. One person had left and two new ones came.

What all these figures and names show are that as the population of the Furneaux Group increased by 30 percent as revealed in each census until the 1920s, non-Aborigines were taking over what was once the domain of Aborigines. As we have seen, arguments had raged over pastoral interests destroying the muttonbird islands, which allegedly caused a decline in the resource, and resulted in the alienation of the Aborigines from their once favourite muttonbird rookery, Chappell Island. The last bastion of muttonbirding for the Aborigines was now Babel Island, but it too was to get uninvited attention from the Holloway brothers as will be seen in the next Chapter.

SUMMARY

The period 1900-1928 was the high point of the muttonbird industry in terms of the number of people involved. In the early 1900s about 300 to 400 people took an estimated one million birds annually. The majority of muttonbirders were the Aborigines of Cape Barren Island. With the opening up of Flinders Island new non-Aboriginal settlers also turned towards muttonbirding for an income. They competed with the Aborigines for the muttonbird resource, and increased the pressure on stocks. As a result, regulations were continually being enacted to protect muttonbirds and their habitat. At the beginning of this period the Aborigines still viewed Chappell Island as their main rookery, although within a few years it was outstripped by Babel Island. Chappell Island was experiencing degradation of habitat from domestic stock, and its very large snake population deterred some muttonbirders.

Each season muttonbirders obtained their supplies from Thomas Barrett's store on Long Island which was the main store in the Group. Barrett bought birds to sell in Launceston and was a muttonbirder himself with a shed on Chappell Island. Companies and shopkeepers in Launceston such as C. H. Smith and Co. also bought birds and set up muttonbirders by providing them with supplies, the cost of which they deducted when they received the birds. Prior to 1914 nearly all muttonbirds for sale were salted, with a very small percentage smoked, as there was no refrigeration yet available on the islands. In 1914 a canning factory at Lady Barron was established, and successfully canned birds for several years.

Because of the great interest in the birds as food for human consumption, presentation was of prime importance. The presence of 'bad' birds was a common feature every season. Upgrading of health standards commenced in 1920 with the appointment of two health inspectors to police the industry. The inspectors looked for proper disposal of offal, clean processing sheds, and proper packing of the muttonbirds in casks. New processing sheds were required to have concrete floors.

From the scant data available for the period 1915-1928, it can be estimated that the number of sheds reached a peak of 63 in 1922, when there were 24 on Babel, 17 on Chappell, 11 on Great Dog, 7 on Little Green and 4 on Little Dog Islands. Up to 400 men, women and children participated in the harvest. Trading boats made up to five return trips to the muttonbird islands to take the first birds of the season to Launceston and to pick up passengers at the end of the season, sometimes as late as June.

CHAPTER 9

THE MUTTONBIRD INDUSTRY, 1928-1955

*Indeed the first time I saw muttonbirds on a ship was at Ulverstone which is a tiny port, it's not an important port...She came in but they had the muttonbirds down the stays, full feather, up by the beak...He said "These are muttonbirds. They've got a bit of a fancy name". And he knew *Puffinus tenuirostris*. And I thought it was a make believe and then I said, "say it again". And I said, that's Latin, I studied Latin. And he said, "Do you know what it means"? I didn't. And he said "I don't know Latin and I know what it means". And he told me. (Patsy Adam-Smith interview).*

In enacting new game protection legislation about every ten years, the government showed its awareness of the need to conserve Tasmania's wildlife. In 1928 it legislated the third major Act in 21 years to conserve animals and birds. The purpose of the Animals and Birds Protection Act, 1928 was "to provide for the protection and conservation of the wild animals and birds of the state, and for other purposes". The Act was administered through the Animals and Birds Protection Board which was made up of wildlife policing officers as field staff, and an advisory board of government and private individuals. The management of the muttonbird industry was a major preoccupation of the Board, due to the involvement of many people in an essentially primitive meat processing industry that required close supervision (because of low standards of hygiene). The industry was also unique; there was nothing like it anywhere else in the world.

The Department of Public Health enforced minimum standards of hygiene, but it was not a conservation organisation. It was not concerned about the conservation of the muttonbird in terms of whether the population could sustain the high levels of

exploitation of around one million chicks each year, as it did not have any knowledge of the biology of the muttonbird on which to base management of the industry. This was left to the Animals and Birds Protection Board which desired, as one of its aims, a study of the muttonbird population. Twenty years later (in 1947), when the study commenced the muttonbird industry had considerably declined in importance, and instead of being vital for management purposes, the study provided a fascinating insight into a bird that people had marvelled at for years. Interest turned to the muttonbird itself.

While the government legislated for a new conservation Act, the muttonbirders were trying to form themselves into an association to lobby for their interests. Several times a muttonbirders' association was formed, but each was short-lived.

MUTTONBIRDING FROM 1928 to 1940

The Animals and Birds Protection Act, 1928

The Act initially set the muttonbird season (by regulation) to be from 20 March to 20 May, with licence fees as for the 1919 Act. It was changed when a petition circulated by 27 muttonbirders requesting a shortening of the season to 30 April to prevent night-birding was agreed to for the 1930 season (AOT AA 612/21/1, Constable Fisher to Superintendent Gunner, Launceston, 26 December 1928). Similarly, no animals other than dogs on chains were allowed on the muttonbird islands (*Tasmanian Government Gazette* 23 April 1929: 1025-1026).

The Act also prohibited night-birding. It was a persistent problem that taxed the efforts of the police to catch offenders. The police tactics were to have the two local police boats stationed around Babel and Chappell Islands looking for torch light on land. The police could then stealthily make their way ashore in a dinghy and catch the perpetrators. However, the closure of the season on 30 April season did not prevent night-birding as the birds did not start leaving the burrows until late April. On Babel Island many torch batteries were sold by the store set up temporarily on the island during the season:

Batteries, torch batteries, what they used to do, it wasn't legal. When it came the end of the season they'd go around with torches, catch the birds when they came out of the burrows of the night ready to go fly away. Sold hundreds of these torch batteries in those days. Sevenpence a piece for batteries, to put into torches (Herbie Nicholls interview).

The policemen stationed on Flinders Island were heavily involved in policing the muttonbird season as the Act was still administered by police officers through the Attorney-General's Department.

The Holloways and Ownership of Sheds in the 1930s

On Great Dog and Little Green Islands, each shed owner had a 'gentlemen's agreement' to work only certain parts of the rookery. Occasionally the boundaries were overstepped and arguments arose. Little Dog Island, which was mostly privately owned, did not have such a problem. On Babel Island there were no boundaries, but in practice each shed owner worked the rookery nearby, except for the private freehold of 98 acres at the northern end of the island owned by the Holloway brothers. Chappell Island was worked similarly to Babel Island.

The Holloway brothers had definite views about the industry and tolerated no interference from anyone, particularly bureaucrats who, they felt, knew little of what was going on, or Aborigines who, in their opinion, were just ignorant (AOT AA 612/21/1, H. R. Holloway to Commissioner of Police, 15 December 1928). One of the brothers, Henry Joseph Holloway, was involved in all matters of business, and also styled himself as "acting civilian research officer" on muttonbirds on behalf of the government (or so he claimed) through obtaining simple biological data from birds breeding on Fisher Island (*Mercury* 5 March 1937). Although much of the information obtained was of little value, Holloway recognised that "good data" were required if the industry was to progress in the twentieth century. He tried to incorporate such data in his frequent correspondence with the Commissioner of Police (AOT AA 612/21/1, H. J. Holloway to Commissioner of Police, 1 November 1933). But it was basically a vehicle to advertise his muttonbirds and their products to an unsuspecting public (Holloway 1936: 101).

Under the business name of 'Sokkar', Holloway marketed muttonbird fat and oil mixed with grain as stock food. Sold separately, the oil was extolled as the best medicine for coughs and weak chests. Holloway claimed that "independent laboratory tests" had shown the oil to be high in vitamin content. He described it as acting "like a sparking plug on the system". As it is a wax ester this claim can safely be dismissed, and tests on it showed it to be devoid of vitamins (Davies 1935: 83). The oil was more suitable as a lubricant, for dressing leather and other similar tasks. However, claims were made as early as 1900 that tuberculosis patients in New Zealand who were fed on muttonbirds improved in health (Purdy 1900: 470), though perhaps just being fed nourishing food.

was enough to boost health. Muttonbirders still claim that the oil and eating muttonbirds are of therapeutical benefit:

You tried muttonbird oil? Very good for colds. Have tried it. The cure is worse than the complaint. Racehorses, they used it a lot on racehorses now. In the way of drenches and things like this. In their food, they give about a tablespoon in their chaff (Murray Holloway interview).

Other products marketed by Holloway were oil-fat calf and poultry emulsion, vitamin food and oil-fat "...for race and draught horses. Creates energy, strength, vigorous operation...", and also special muttonbird fat salve, and muttonbird oil for "worm in sheep. Stomach tonic for stock. Acts as pick-me-up". Holloway also owned the Bass Strait Preserving Company at one time in the 1930s (Murray Holloway interview). Probably operating under a different name, the company processed muttonbirds, but also abalone and almost any other product that could be canned.

The Holloways bought the 98 acres freehold on Babel Island about 1926. The land was densely burrowed by muttonbirds, but flat and prone to flooding after heavy rain. It was generally regarded as the place on Babel Island where the smallest and poorest birds came from. Henry Russell Holloway also held similar flat rookery areas on Great Dog Island. To overcome the problem on Babel Island, three large open drains were constructed that took the water to the sea. On inspection, the local Flinders Island policeman, Constable Fisher, and Police Commissioner Lord, were convinced that one of the major purposes of the drains was to trap fledgling muttonbird chicks as they made their way to sea near the end of April. The Holloways denied this, stating that their aim was to improve the rookery. Henry wrote that, as the largest employer on Babel Island, there was no one more committed than the Holloways to helping the industry. They had attempted to start a muttonbirders' association but there were no participants. According to Henry Russell Holloway:

We then sailed out on our own registered a trade mark, advertised marketed the products, an up hill battle ended in success, that our demand was more than supply, thus our reason for acquiring the largest privately owned rookery in Australia. By these efforts as a firm others benefited off our bat, because the market for these products have never been on such a sound basis as they are now.

We have not got any credit for this but like most humanity they do not like to se [sic] the other fellow get on, we have stood on our own we went to them first, but they have to come to us now & we bear no malice but will help them.

We know you get many letters with regard to the industry some from white half castes (as it were) & halfcastes the majority of these people do not count as they are irresponsible, cannot handle do not try to handle their sheds and products rightly, should really not have sheds only with a master hand over them (AOT AA 612/21/1, H. R. Holloway to Commissioner of Police, 15 December 1928).

The racist attitude exhibited by the Holloways extended to the fact that they did not employ Aborigines if non-Aboriginal muttonbirders were available (AOT AA 612/21/2, W. Holloway to Minister for Lands, 1 January 1937). The gradual takeover of muttonbird sheds by non-Aborigines, like the Holloways, who wanted to turn muttonbirding into a large business, began on Babel Island. Of the 25 sheds on Babel Island in 1937, 21 were owned by Aborigines and 4 by non-Aborigines. The total number of sheds had decreased by three since 1929, when figures were last available. The policeman on Flinders Island had a policy of favouring Aborigines to hold onto their sheds as much as possible despite a lack of official support. According to Constable Berryman, there were married Aborigines who needed and wanted sheds to support their families who merited preference. It was felt that multiple ownership would force the Aborigines who owned sheds to sell them and get out of the industry. The consequences of this would be exploitation of the muttonbirders through monopolies.

In 1937 Berryman refused to permit birding sheds to be sold to commercial interests which included Harry Lockhart, the shopkeeper at Lady Barron who also ran a store on Babel Island, Mrs Nichols, who owned the trading vessel, the *Lady Flinders*, and Eric Vimpany, who had a general store on Babel Island. In the 1937 season Lockhart bought approximately 80,000 muttonbirds from shed owners on Babel Island as payment for stores and to settle old accounts at low prices compared to what the muttonbirders would have received for them in Launceston. Before the start of the next season none of Berrymans' recommendations had been adopted. The ownership battle between Aborigines and business interests was then won within a few years, when the majority of sheds on Babel Island were transferred to business people. The original Aboriginal owners became employees as paid supervisors or operators.

As early as 1930 the Holloways were said to have one of the Aboriginal shed owners irredeemably in debt to them. The debt was paid off in birds and "...each year the greater part of the catch is branded for Holloway, off the debt but the debt never gets any less" (AOT AA 612/21/2, Constable Berryman to Superintendent of Police, Launceston, 20 June 1930). The price of a shed in those days was about £20 which was virtually impossible for most Aborigines to raise. Holding an Aboriginal shed owner in debt was similar to the system of providing the resources for that person to go muttonbirding, and asking him or her to repay the debt at the end of the season. Termed 'setting up', it was an accepted way of going muttonbirding:

And old Mr Gunter [storekeeper at Lady Barron] he used to, what we call, term, a loose word then, 'set them up', provide all their food and all the things they needed for the season. The condition was that they paid him when they sold the birds, or he was a bird buyer, and there was also another bird buyer, H. J. Holloway. And that went on very well for years and years. Merchants in Launceston used to also set them up. And they would send their birds by branding them on the head of the cask who they were for, and the number of birds that were in them (Leedham Walker interview).

In 1937 all sheds on Great Dog, Little Dog and Little Green Islands were still owned by non-Aborigines. On Great Dog Island four of the shed owners present in 1922, fifteen years previously, were still there. Of the other eight, three were there in 1928, when names were last available. Similarly with Little Green Island, where four of the six were still in possession from 1922, though on Little Dog Island it was only one of three. The shed ownership on Chappell Island was eight by Aborigines and two by non-Aborigines. As in earlier decades, outsiders had come in and obtained sheds. Those who stayed to make their home on Flinders Island enjoyed the lifestyle:

I didn't really intend to come but I was riding around Launceston on a motor bike and I went down to the wharf and met these fellas and they were going muttonbirding. I thought, oh gee this is a chance to go muttonbirding. I come down here and the first person I met was an old half-caste named Claude Brown, and he asked me what I was doing, and I told him I had just come down to have a look at the muttonbirds. He talked to me and wanted to know if I would work for him, see. I thought this would be all right, you know. And I went over to Chappell Island, and then onto Cape Barren, got some timber and stuff, done the shed up

and I worked the season there. She was a good hard tough life, and that's the way I like it (Roy Goss interview).

The government recognised the problem of ownership of sheds falling into too few hands and looked into the question of limiting owners of muttonbird sheds to one building. However, it was found to be difficult to enforce this restriction under the regulations of the Crown Land Act, 1911 and the matter was dropped. The problem was not made easier by the wheeling and dealing between Aboriginal owners during times of financial stress when sheds changed hands to enable people to survive during the year. Later, when the stress had passed, the sellers often attempted to buy back their shed or claim someone else's (AOT AA 612/21/1, Commissioner of Police to Secretary for Lands, 28 February 1934). The lack of Aboriginal ownership meant they had no say in an industry that affected them the most. They could not haggle over the price of the birds and were compelled to accept whatever was offered. As continually noted above, most Aborigines depended on muttonbirding. In contrast, the majority of non-Aboriginal muttonbirders, whether operators or shed owners had blocks of land or farms to return to. Also, by residing on Flinders Island, they had more opportunity for finding work.

A muttonbirders' association was formed in 1932 by Henry Joseph Holloway and other non-Aboriginal shed holders in their own interests. He claimed that the Association embraced "90 % of the Birders but really over 95% of the catch" (AOT AA 612/21/1, H. J. Holloway to Commissioner of Police, 1 November 1933). However, the Association mainly represented the shed holders on islands in Franklin Sound. The Aborigines had no place in it, because they were already selling their birds to some of the non-Aboriginal muttonbirders, or directly to C. H. Smith and Co. and other merchants in Launceston. Very few of the Aborigines, who principally worked Babel Island, had the skills to become involved with the marketing of muttonbirds, which was one of the main purposes of the Association. In 1933 the Association lobbied to reduce production in 1934 to overcome the oversupply of muttonbirds on the Launceston market. Aborigines were not asked their opinion. Fortunately for the industry, the matter soon resolved itself when the market picked up.

The Aborigines and Holloway were also at odds over the extent of the season, which the Animals and Birds Protection Board had proposed to run from 25 March to 5 May. Through personal letters and petitions, members of the Muttonbirders' Association and the Aborigines both attempted to sway the Board to their points of view (AOT AA 612/21/1, H. J. Holloway to Commissioner of Police, 1 November 1933; Petition from non-Aboriginal Muttonbirders to ABPB, 20 December 1933; Petition from Aborigines on

Cape Barren Island to Chairman of the Birds Protection Board [sic], 4 January 1934). The Aborigines congratulated the Board on its decision to make the 25th the starting date instead of the 20th. Holloway, on the other hand, ridiculed it, saying it was going to be the ruination of the canning of muttonbirds as the birds would be too far advanced in their growth to process. It would be "a dead loss of the most valuable Byproducts Oil & early down feathers". The Aborigines also disapproved of night-birding, though they seemed just as culpable as any others in their use of that particular technique. However, they knew that to get on with the bureaucrats they had to accept the regulations:

We so called Half-castes can clearly understand that it is our duty to place befor [sic] the gentlemen of the birds Protection board, all matters of facts for their approval, for the well fare [sic] of us people who look upon the Mutton-bird season for a living, and for the welfare of the Mutton bird industry and the protection of the mutton-bird (AOT AA 612/21/1, Petition from Aborigines on Cape Barren Island, 4 January 1934).

The decision by the Board slightly modified the dates to satisfy both sides. They were set to be from 23 March to 30 April 1934, and this appeared to satisfy all concerned. Nothing more was heard on the topic.

Resumption of Freehold Land on Babel Island

Although the muttonbird seasons in the 1930s were well controlled through regulations, the government was still concerned about not having full control over the rookeries. Under the 1928 Act the Animals and Birds Protection Board had a duty to "maintain, protect and regulate the taking of the Mutton Bird" and as an aid to this, it felt that there could be no satisfactory administration of the industry until the freehold was acquired. There was nothing to prevent people from landing on the islands outside the muttonbird season, and the possibility of stock roaming onto crown land was also near-impossible to police. Also, despite the general opinion that some of the rookeries, like Little Green Island, were declining, the government could not prevent over-harvesting. In 1936 it floated the idea of resuming all the freehold land on islands reserved for muttonbirding (AOT AA 612/21/1, Commissioner of Police to Attorney-General, 27 October 1936). The blocks recommended for resumption with area, owner's name and assessed capital value were: on Chappell Island, 49 3/4 acres, T. W. Barrett, £150, 40 acres, J. L. Virieux, £120; Babel Island, 100 acres, W. G. Holloway, H. R. Holloway and H. J. Holloway, £300; Little Green Island, 41 acres, T. W. Barrett, £150, 16 acres, Henry Taylor, £50. There was no freehold on the other islands reserved for muttonbirding, viz.

Forsyth and Storehouse Islands, which were not commercially worked anyway. Little Dog Island was not reserved. The valuations did not reflect reality as the commercial prices were ten times higher.

After some deliberation, only Babel Island was considered for resumption (AOT AA 612/21/1, Commissioner of Police to Director of Public Works, 8 December 1937). It was the best commercial muttonbird rookery in Tasmania as it provided about 50 percent of the annual total catch. The Board had no funds to resume the block but assumed that money would be made available if the government approved of the resumption (AOT AA 612/21/1, Commissioner of Police to Director of Public Works, 9 August 1937).

Initially, William Holloway was against the resumption as he believed that freehold gave him the security of access to the resource needed to fulfil his contracts. If deprived of the land he would, he feared, be deprived of the muttonbirds. Against this it was pointed out that the land could not hold any more sheds than were on it already, and Holloway would still retain ownership of his sheds. Holloway reduced the selling price to £2,500 from £3,000 "on account of war condition" (AOT AA 612/21/1, W. Holloway to Minister for Lands and Works, 2 December 1939), and after finally obtaining the approval of the Attorney-General in January 1940, the Commissioner of Police acquired the block one year later (*Tasmanian Government Gazette* 16 April 1941: 882). Resumption did not result in any change to the status of muttonbirders on the island. The Holloways continued to employ Aborigines, and the Aboriginal shed owners were still controlled by those who set them up.

The Annual Catch of Muttonbirds

One of the most important wildlife duties of the local policemen from 1928 was to estimate the season's catch by interviewing each shed holder. However, there was no regulation requiring muttonbirders to send in catch returns until 1948 (*Tasmanian Government Gazette* 1 December 1948: 3214). It seems that the policemen regarded the interviews as a reasonably accurate means of estimating the season's total catch, although a definite figure was hard to arrive at as each shed holder, when asked what his catch was, replied "about the same as the previous year" (AOT AA 612/21/2, Constable Fisher to Commissioner of Police, 30 November 1933). The estimates were also used by the police to strengthen their case for changing existing or bringing in new muttonbird regulations (AOT AA 612/21/2, Constable Berryman to Superintendent of Police, Launceston, 19 May 1935).

The police also collected lease fees for sheds situated on crown land. This did not include all sheds as there was doubt whether some were on crown land or on freehold title. Between 1922 and 1930 the fee for each shed site had remained unchanged at £3 on Little Green Island, £2 on Babel and Chappell Islands, and £5/5/- on Great Dog Island (AOT AA 612/21/2, Secretary for Lands to Andrewartha, Police Department, 5 February 1932). In 1931 the fees were halved for Babel and Great Dog Islands because of hardship brought upon by the Depression and unfavourable muttonbird seasons (AOT AA 612/21/2, Petition from ten Aborigines on Cape Barren Island to Minister for Lands, 30 January 1932). The reductions occurred the following year with a fee of £2 for Little Green Island and £1 for Chappell Island (AOT AA 612/21/2, Secretary for Lands to Major Davies M. H. A., 23 February 1932). Muttonbird licence fees were also reduced to 10/- for adults and 5/- for children under the age of twelve years.

Between 1928 and 1933 the total catch was estimated at around 900,000 birds each season. In 1935 the total catch was estimated at 420,000 birds, of which 399,000 were for sale. According to Launceston Marine Board figures 322,636 of these birds were shipped into Launceston from the islands. The remainder were probably sold on Flinders Island, Hobart or elsewhere, or canned at Lady Barron. The large drop in production was due to a poor breeding season. Thousands of birds were reported to be dead at sea and on the rookeries (AOT AA 612/21/2, Constable Berryman to Superintendent of Police, Launceston, 21 February 1935). In spite of the fluctuations in seasons, income earned from muttonbirding remained important to the economy of the Furneaux Group. In 1936 243 people, of whom 173 were licensed to take birds, worked as pluckers, cleaners, catchers and at other muttonbird jobs. Under the Act, "to take" included plucking, and assisting with and doing tasks that involved the harvesting of muttonbirds, which meant that about a quarter of the people were not licensed. About 100 of the 243 people, mostly Aborigines, were on Babel Island where there were 24 sheds. The catch for each shed on Babel Island was estimated at between 10,000 to 45,000, of which the Holloway's family catch of 45,000 was the largest for any shed in the Furneaux Group. Prices ranged from £1 to £1/5/- per 100 birds averaging at £1/1/- for muttonbirds from all the islands for the 1936 season.

To the 251 inhabitants on Cape Barren Island, the income from muttonbirding could now be added to that received from government grants for job creation on council projects. With two sources of income, the 1930s have been described as being some of the best times on Cape Barren Island, as previously described in Chapter 6. Despite the importance of muttonbirding the former problems remained. Sheep and cattle continued to trample in burrows on Chappell and Little Green Islands respectively, while Little Dog

Island was over-harvested (AOT AA 612/21/2, Constable Berryman to Secretary of ABPB, 21 August 1936). The large number of snakes on Chappell Island continued to make muttonbirders nervous, though it may be that the reptiles were merely used as an excuse for the declining productivity of the rookery, when it was more likely to be as a result of stock grazing. The main muttonbird island in Franklin Sound, Great Dog Island, was seen to be "about the same as usual" but over-harvested, with a very small percentage of chicks escaping, according to Constable Berryman. Babel and Great Dog Islands were said to be overrun with dogs, with one to four at every shed. They were a source of discontent on all the islands because some muttonbirders were using them to locate birds. After discussions with the owners, Constable Berryman recommended that dogs be prohibited, as those he spoke to said that they would have no trouble finding some one to look after their pets.

In his report, Berryman's main recommendation was for a reduction in the number of birds caught by limiting the number of sheds on each island, and limiting the number of people employed at each shed. He also recommended that all private land on the muttonbird islands be resumed. He pressed for these recommendations season after season but, as with his recommendation to give preference to Aborigines to own sheds, they were all dismissed by the legislation committee of the Animals and Birds Protection Board. With respect to dogs, the Committee felt that "animal suffering and hardship to individuals would be entailed were not the dogs to accompany the birders to their rookery camps" (AOT AA 612/21/2, Commissioner of Police to Superintendent Eyles, Launceston, 9 November 1939).

In 1937 Constable Berryman recorded that 242 licences were issued as follows (AOT AA 612/21/2, Constable Berryman to Superintendent of Police, Launceston, 20 June 1937):

Babel Island 113 licences to 75 catchers and 38 pluckers in 25 sheds;

Chappell Island 37 licences to 24 catchers and 13 pluckers in 9 sheds;

Great Dog Island 58 licences to 38 catchers and 20 pluckers in 12 sheds;

Little Dog Island 15 licences to 10 catchers and 5 pluckers in 3 sheds;

Little Green Island 14 licences to 10 catchers and 4 pluckers in 4 sheds.

Assuming that Aborigines formed the main ethnic group on Babel and Chappell Islands, and non-Aborigines on the other islands, there was no difference in the average number of four to five catchers and pluckers working at any shed in the Furneaux Group. The number of people was probably limited by the size of the shed and capacity of the rookery allocated to it, and although there was no annual quota, their working capacity was one of the limiting factors on the size of the annual catch. Including women and

children, there may have been around 400 people out on the islands with well over 200 of them on Babel Island. Many of the people employed by W. Holloway on Babel Island were from Launceston (AOT AA 612/21/2, W. Holloway to Minister for Lands, 1 January 1937), and in the 1938 season there were 259 men, women and children on the island (AOT AA 612/21/2, Constable Berryman to Superintendent Hynes, Launceston, 26 August 1938). Overall, the 1937 season was one of the best for many years as the price obtained was £1 to £1/10/- per 100 birds. Feathers sold at 3 1/2d to 4d per pound and oil from £5 to £6 per 40 gallon drum.

The whole Cape Barren Island community moved onto Babel Island for the muttonbird season. The close family ties of the Aborigines resulted in large extended families where every person knew their elders as 'aunty' or 'uncle':

In the forties there was still a few people on Babel like Darcy Maynard and his family. Young Sammy Thomas, he had a shed at Hawks Nest, Uncle Jiddle we used to call him, however he had a shed at South East Beach and Sydney Mansell, he was Ernie's father, Uncle Cliff Everett, Uncle Ted Mansell, he had a shed, Syddy, Uncle Ernest, Uncle Harold, that was five sheds what I can remember at the South East Beach. Then there was Mavis and Sammy at the Hawk Nest. There was only two sheds there, we worked a shed there for a couple of years. Ossie Brodie he worked right round at the North Point. Uncle Sam Thomas, he had the North Point, that was after Bill Holloway worked there in the first place. He used to have two gangs of men. He had twenty, thirty men - from the mainland, gawd he used to work hard. Then there was Morton Green, Albert Everett and Uncle Ben Brown, then the West Beach what I can remember and Uncle Uck, that's Edevine's father, they worked right in the little corner of the West Beach on the point there. Then you came back round to the Gulch. There was Darcy Maynard, the shed that we worked, Bernard Maynard and Summers, all worked in the Gulch (Marge Mansell interview).

To administer first-aid for the people on Babel Island, the government appointed a bush nurse in 1936. With money from the fund set up to administer the Cape Barren Island Reserve, the nurse had a little house built for her at the Gulch and was supplied with a radio. There was also a shop (and sometimes two) on the island which was first commenced by the local shopkeeper from Lady Barron in the 1920s, after which a number of other proprietors tried their hand. The enterprise ceased in the early 1950s

when the cost of transport together with the low number of muttonbirders rendered the store uneconomic. In its time the shop provided people with such needs as cigarettes, confectionery and clothing:

I sold flour and sugar. Of course they are basics. You had to use them all the time. Of course jam. They liked a fair few sweets too. And cigarettes, sixpence a packet that's all you paid. But they always liked a bit of drapery. When it came to dress they all liked plenty of colour. I sold red men's shirts and that, you see a different one every week sort of thing, they sort of liked that bit of colour around (Herbie Nicholls interview).

Purchases were sometimes paid for outright, but mostly they were run up on accounts and paid off in barrels of birds or when cash from muttonbird sales came in. According to Nicholls, the Aborigines were completely honest and gave no trouble when it came to settling debts:

You did most of your trading of a night or a weekend so you walked around the sheds and see what they are doing through the day because you had to know whether they were getting anything to pay you for. You had to have a bit of money in them pockets, you had to give them a bit of money all the time they played two-up and that, so they had to have a bit of money to play about with all the time. But I sold a lot of hundreds of pounds worth of stuff those days, I was never robbed. -Nobody ever robbed me. I got paid for everything, everybody paid up aright (Herbie Nicholls interview).

Prices for birds continued to improve, and in 1938 they ranged from £1/5/- to £1/12/6 per 100 birds, averaging £1/7/6 (AOT AA 612/21/2, Constable Berryman to Superintendent Hynes, Launceston, 26 August 1938). They were similar in 1939, deemed an excellent season. Fair prices were also obtained for the feathers, oil and fat. The higher prices obtained in these two years had nothing to do with inflation which was then negligible in Tasmania (Robson 1991: 527). The amount of fat collected was considerably less than oil because of the extra labour required for its production, and the small return for it. In 1939 only eleven 40 gallon drums of fat were collected compared with 120 of oil. Complaints of dogs, night-birding and over-exploitation continued but no people were caught and no action occurred. There was also talk of restricting a person, firm or company to one shed holder's licence (AOT AA 612/21/2, Constables

Mansfield, Fisher and Berryman to Superintendent Eyles, Launceston, 15 November 1939). Tracks were cut on Babel Island that linked the West Beach to the Gulch and South East Beach. These tracks facilitated the health inspector, bush nurse and muttonbirders in moving around the island.

The health inspector still remained on the islands throughout the duration of the season. Because of the large workload involved in inspecting the sheds, the packing process and general hygiene, he was assisted by the local policeman who was appointed a special health inspector during the season. This appointment was a result of a suggestion from C. H. Smith and Co. who frequently complained of the poor standard of packing on the islands (AOT AA 612/21/1, G. P. Smith to Attorney-General, 15, 19 March 1938). The suggestion overcame the need to find extra money to fund the position from the department's own staff, because the Muttonbirders Association, approached to contribute to the cost of maintaining an inspector on the islands during the season, had already cried poor.

Until 1940 the number of muttonbird sheds and licence holders remained static as the decline on Chappell, Little Green and Little Dog Islands was compensated by the increase on Babel Island to 26 sheds in 1939. Licences were issued to 230 people in 1938, 254 in 1939, 222 in 1940, and 158 in 1941 (AOT AA 612/21/2, Annual Muttonbird Reports, 1938-41). The reasons for the big drop in 1941 were reported to be the low price being paid for birds, and the fact that C. H. Smith and Co. were making all the muttonbirders who they set up sign a contract to forward all birds and the by-products to them (AOT AA 612/21/2, Constable Berryman to Superintendent Eyles, Launceston, 30 May 1941). Fewer muttonbirders signed up as a consequence. Muttonbirding now was not their only source of income. With government welfare money available they could afford for the very first time in the history of the Aboriginal community the luxury of asking for more satisfactory arrangements. The impact of the Second World War resulted in a further decline in the number of licences issued in 1942 to 123 people.

A Second Attempt at Canning Muttonbirds

Towards the end of the 1930s new technology was introduced into the muttonbird industry. William Holloway announced that he would be installing plucking machines in both his own and his mother's sheds during the 1938 season (AOT AA 612/21/1, Constable Berryman to Superintendent of Police, Launceston, 2 January 1938). The experiment was not particularly successful:

That was on Babel Island in 1937 and only had it going for one year there. It plucked too close to the skin and it made the birds oily and it didn't clean the finer down off. It was almost as if you had dipped them in oil. It used to pull the feathers and fat and then you used to rub them clean and this just made it impossible (David Rhodes interview).

In 1939 a new way of marketing muttonbirds was introduced. Frozen muttonbirds, sold as fresh birds, were processed by C. H. Smith and Co. in partnership with Dunkerley Bros. of Metro Ice in Melbourne. At this time C. H. Smith and Co., having been many years in the muttonbird business, had become one of the major buyers of birds on the islands. Trading under the name Flinders Island Trading Co. a freezing and cannery works was set up in a large, purpose-built factory at Lady Barron:

With their refrigerators set up they were able to freeze the birds. How they transported them from Flinders Island to the mainland, mainly Melbourne it was then, they designed insulated containers and they'd shock freeze the birds at thirty below zero in the quick freezing chamber, hold them at that until they were able to put them into the insulated containers just prior to the vessel sailing. They would retain this deep frozen state up to seven days because the passage of time between Flinders Island-Melbourne was a couple of days. This worked very well and we never lost any frozen birds between Flinders Island and Melbourne (Bill King interview).

Dunkerley Bros. soon got into debt, owing approximately £5,000 on freight to Holyman's shipping service, and a similar sum to J. Gadsen of Melbourne who manufactured the steel cans that were used (Keith Holyman interview). The cannery was sold to Holyman Bros. of Launceston and then operated under the name of Fish Canneries of Tasmania Pty. Ltd. The company canned fish in Launceston, and abandoned Flinders Island except to can muttonbirds, which became a side-line supported economically by the Launceston fish cannery. In 1942 the company collected and canned 180,500 muttonbirds from Great Dog, Little Dog and Little Green Islands. These birds were skinned and delivered daily to the factory. The prices paid were £1 per 100 birds on the island for all skinned birds the company took. Salted birds (mainly from Babel Island) were also bought by C. H. Smith and Co. for £1 per 100 birds, and sold by them in Launceston for £1/7/6 per 100 birds. The cannery had adopted a more scientific approach:

One of the early things we did was to get a qualified chemist set up a laboratory with the necessary equipment to do the testing and quality control of our product. Norman Gadsen felt we should be able to can muttonbirds and not have this dreadful business of having them in casks, just salted. We canned some and when we opened them the colour was shocking, you wouldn't believe, so we set the chemist to work to find out why, what was wrong. After a series of experiments, he said "well we are canning blubber not fat and the so-called fat of the muttonbird is blubber, the same as the whale has". So we found that by skinning the birds and being absolutely certain there was no skerrick of the so-called fat, that we could can them very successfully. And muttonbird being a derogatory sort of name we called it "squab-in-aspic". We put it up in a flat type sixteen ounce can which took one and a half birds.

We had women do the dissection. We bought them [birds] in daily and we arranged with them [muttonbirders] that they would skin them. When you skin them you take pretty well all the fat off, then the women cleaned them up and dissected them and put them into the cans and we canned them on Flinders Island. Eventually the whole of our output went to the American forces. We couldn't get enough, the demand was very, very good (Keith Holyman interview).

In 1943 the cannery processed 145,363 birds, paying the same price to the muttonbirder as in the previous season. The production in the following years was 214,839 in 1944; 202,032 in 1945; 205,420 in 1946; 256,147 in 1947; 238,000 in 1948 and 258,263 in 1949. The increase was brought about by greater production on all the islands as the work-force increased and the situation returned to normal following the end of the War. The output was about 6,500 tins per day. In early 1950 there was a rumour around Lady Barron "that the canning factory might not be accepting birds this season owing to unsold stocks of previous seasons' birds being on hand" (AOT AA 612/22/4A, Serventy to Secretary of ABPB, 20 January 1950). The rumour turned out to be correct, as the Americans put a stop to canning by demanding inspection "at the point of vivisection" by an American health inspector (Keith Holyman interview). This was impossible, so the cans were sold on the Australian market until 1952 when it also became unprofitable to can fish due to the competition of cheaper Japanese imports.

Snakes

Three species of snakes, all poisonous, occur on the Bass Strait islands. The tiger snake *Notechis ater* is the most lethal and common, compared to the smaller copperhead *Austrelaps superbis* and the little white-lipped whip snake *Drysdalia coronoides*. Found to lengths of 1.6 m, the tiger snake is especially abundant on Chappell Island where it grows very large but is docile in character:

They weren't snakes! Gawd, they were lifters! Biggest snakes I've ever seen. My dad was six foot something, and when he stood up, as a matter of fact there's a photo here somewhere of him with his arm length with the snakes touching the ground. Gawd, there some lifters, I can assure you (Fay Newall interview).

According to muttonbirders on Chappell Island "...the only snake that was any good if you worked there was a dead one" (Leila Virieux interview). The chance of pulling out a snake instead of a muttonbird from a burrow was high. Such instances were first recorded by Matthew Flinders in 1798 on Preservation Island (Flinders 1814: cxxxiv). However, it was not until the death of Arthur King during the 1938 season that official control measures were first taken:

What he did was, he got bitten on the finger there and he just thought it was an old bird nipped him. Sometimes you get the old mother bird still in the burrow and he went on catching birds, and he got dizzy. And he looked at his finger and he could see the two punctures. Of course he got his knife out to cut it and he fainted, collapsed. Well when he came to he couldn't find the knife so he bit the piece out of his finger and when he did, he bit his tongue and bit his lips and that's what killed him. He fixed the finger up aright but he died in the pub on Flinders (Leila Virieux interview).

Following this incident, the local policeman recommended in his report on the 1938 muttonbird season that a bounty of 3d per snake tail be paid for one year as a trial. People would be issued a voucher for the tails when the policeman came around the island to collect muttonbird licence fees (AOT AA 612/22, Constable Berryman to Superintendent Hynes, Launceston, 26 August 1938). Unlike the majority of Constable Berryman's carefully reasoned recommendations this one was adopted.

There is no record of how much royalty was paid out on the tiger snakes killed on Chappell Island. The scheme kept children busy collecting snakes and blue-tongued lizards (the latter were used to dupe the inspector). The tails were discarded after being counted, so children would pick them up and race around to the inspectors' next call to offer their catch anew (Phyllis Pitchford and Roy Goss interviews). The policeman was wise to the trick, but due to the small cost of the bounty did not take it seriously. In March 1939 the local policeman was told that up to 1,000 snakes had been caught that season. This led the Minister for Lands and Works to suggest that the bounty should be lifted to 4d "...as the increased royalty would provide a greater incentive" (AOT AA 612/21, Minister for Lands and Works to Commissioner of Police, 30 March 1939). By 1945, the snakes were stated to have been reduced below the danger limit, though a shortage of water may have contributed as much as the royalty system to this population decline. The Animals and Birds Protection Board recommended that no further action be taken at the moment but if royalty was to be paid, then heads instead of tails should be produced (AOT AA 612/22/3, ABPB Meeting, Sheffield, 10 August 1945).

The bounty system was in addition to the 'shoots' on Chappell Island organised by the local police since the 1930s. Under authority from the Board, the policeman was accompanied by muttonbirders, and up to 200 snakes were shot in one or two days. In the 1942 season 1,250 snakes were accounted for (AOT AA 612/21/2, Constable Berryman to Superintendent of Police, Launceston, 6 June 1942). Later on, when biological research on the muttonbird was commenced by Dominic Serventy, the tiger snake of Chappell Island was recognised to be a subspecies and named after him. However as the island was not a reserve and the snake was listed as unprotected wildlife, Serventy sanctioned the slaughter, even calling for regular snake 'drives' (AOT AA 612/22/3, Serventy to Thompson of Division of Fisheries, CSIR, 13 November 1945). In 1948 he recommended to the Animals and Birds Protection Board that it make the elimination of snakes from the island one of its major objectives. The following season, only 37 snakes were killed in 4 days, when in the 1948 season that number was taken in the 1 day with "a pea rifle and sticks". But the killing ultimately had a negligible effect on the snake population. In 1958 400 were taken in 4 days for research purposes by the Melbourne University.

By 1958 the cull was left to the muttonbirders to organise. In the 1958-59 season, a "war on the giant tiger snake" resulted in the slaughter of 400 in 3 months (*People* 16 March 1960: 47-49). In addition to these official culls, muttonbirders continued to kill snakes during the season. Control only ceased when commercial muttonbirding ceased on Chappell Island in 1975.

The large number of snakes killed on Chappell Island was typical even in its early history. In 1881 a minimum of 550 snakes were accounted for during the muttonbird season. According to one newspaper correspondent:

The snakes are very numerous this year; about 50 have been killed already. I saw 3 girls (half-castes) bring in 3 snakes, and 2 of the 3 reptiles measured 5 feet one inch each. The girls had killed them with a stick about 2 feet long. Snakes even become bedfellows sometimes. A man and his wife were going to bed when they discovered a snakes about 2 feet in length under the pillow, which they quickly despatched (*Examiner* 26 March 1881).

The island's snake reputation worried even Bishop Montgomery. During one night spent there in an empty hut that was open on all sides and without a door and a roof, the muttonbirders told him so many snake stories that he confessed "...that I never hailed the first streak of dawn with greater delight than upon that Monday morning at Chappell Island" (*Church News* 1 September 1891: 515).

Babel Island was also noted for tiger snakes, where they were said to be so abundant, worse than Chappell Island, that even the Aborigines would not work there (Montgomery 1891: 6). However, the historical evidence, recounted earlier, of the Aborigines moving away from Chappell Island to Babel Island, makes Montgomery's statement look dubious. It was probably a myth, for the snakes of Babel Island were not mentioned in newspaper despatches, as were the Chappell Island snakes.

Suggestions on how to control the snakes were as far-fetched as the snakes were abundant. One shed owner recommended that "shed owners be allowed to shoot snakes when the chickens have hatched, as that is the time when the snakes are plentiful" (AOT AA 612/22/5, G. Brown to Chairman of ABPB, May 1951). The local policeman's idea was to burn the island in order to expose the snakes. The last burn occurred in 1940. The following year the Board granted him permission to burn after the close of the season, and asked him to be careful with fire along the coast owing to the fragile nature of the sand dunes.

Overall, the risk of being bitten and killed by a snake on any island was low. In the early history of the Furneaux Group, Edward Bishop, the son of the lessee of Great Dog Island, died of snake bite in 1869 (40 years later another lessee, Mr Mills, had the reputation of being the best tanner of snake skins in the Furneaux Group; *Examiner* 14

January 1911; *Weekly Courier* 19 January 1911). However, Thomas Beaton and Mrs E. Brown both recovered after being bitten whilst muttonbirding on Chappell Island (*Examiner* 18 April 1910). At that time the home remedies were primitive but effective, the one that Bill Riddle's father used being typical of those in use in the late nineteenth century:

Once on Chappell many, many years ago when my father was in the police. A chap had been bitten by a snake and they didn't have anything then to do anything with, but he cured him by putting a ligature on his arm, cutting it and putting his arm into hot water and keep on bringing the blood down until all the blood was out of it. He recovered but he was pretty crook for a few days (Bill Riddle interview).

Another (perhaps fanciful) early bush remedy for snake bite was the drastic step of chopping off that part of the finger or toe that had been bitten (*Church News* 1 September 1891: 515). But the usual first aid consisted of slowing the flow of blood, cutting the wound and sucking out the poison. On Chappell Island most muttonbirders at least carried a pocket knife and piece of string in case of being bitten (*Examiner* 8 May 1890; Worrell 1958: 177-178). By 1937 serum was available for tiger snake venom and frequently used (*Examiner* 29 September 1937).

Fire

The incidence of fire on rookeries was uncommon but to be feared when it occurred. Apart from these accidental fires, some were deliberately lit. In 1881 the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals attempted to prevent fires from being lit on the islands, and said it had the names of the offenders who had fired Chappell Island (*Examiner* 25 February 1881). Aborigines were accused of lighting that fire, but were exonerated from causing fires on three other muttonbird islands (*Examiner* 7 May 1881). No charges were laid against the alleged perpetrators and the Society's involvement in island affairs quietly ceased. Another fire, also in 1881, destroyed Thomas Barrett's house and muttonbird shed on Little Green Island causing some £200 worth of damage (*Examiner* 26 March, 9 April 1881). The family lost everything, including their clothing. Twenty five years later, the tussocks near Barrett's shed caught alight, but no material damage occurred (*Examiner* 14 May 1906). In 1893 the dwelling and processing shed belonging to B. Maynard on Chappell Island was burnt down (*Examiner* 28 April 1893). Several years later, Alec Ross was burnt out on Vansittart Island while he was smoking muttonbirds in the fireplace of his store (*Examiner* 30 May 1899). The store contained a

large stock of goods and was uninsured. More recently, David Rhodes lost his shed on Great Dog Island to a tussock fire (*Island News* 11 April 1958).

The only known death due to fire occurred in 1942. A baby girl died and her father was badly injured while attempting to rescue her from living quarters that caught alight in a grass fire that swept through the rookery on Great Dog Island (AOT AA 612/21/2, Constable Berryman to Superintendent of Police, Launceston, 27 May 1942; *Flinders Island News* 8 May 1942). Fires always posed a danger to life as, up to 1957, there were many children on the muttonbird islands, as the school-holidays coincided with the muttonbird season. Babies were taken to the islands and the occurrence of childbirth during the season was not uncommon. Sheds were expensive to replace, whilst fire could drastically affect the livelihood of muttonbirders by killing birds, particularly the chicks. To the muttonbirders fire did not have the fascination that it held for one Flinders Island resident who, when Mount Strzelecki was burning, said that there was not a more beautiful sight than a fire against a night sky (*Examiner* 7 March 1895).

The cause of some rookery fires was known, but culprits were hard to pin-point. During the 1933 season a rookery fire on Great Dog Island burnt through the tussocks on the east side, destroying fencing and scorching several sheep. More extensive damage was only prevented because the muttonbirders all rallied promptly to fight the blaze. Few muttonbirds perished. The local policeman, on approaching shed holders to investigate the cause, found "a marked sense of silence amongst the shed holders & birders" (AOT AA 612/21/1, Senior Constable Fisher to Superintendent of Police, Launceston, 24 May 1933). Apparently the fire was started by one of the shed holders' children playing with matches, and the other shed holders wanted to take the matter no further but agreed "...to suffer their loss & remain silent". A similar incident occurred on Babel Island near the end of the 1957 muttonbird season. A fire burnt for about a week through a large part of the island, and was supposedly started by a muttonbirder throwing away a match after lighting a cigarette. Investigations by the police, however, indicated that the fire was deliberately lit, though nothing could be proved. A caution was given to the suspected culprit.

Over the years on the outer muttonbird islands it was a tradition to burn rookeries to expose burrows and snakes, and to promote green feed for domestic stock. Not everyone believed in the practice. Henry Joseph Holloway of Lady Barron opposed the indiscriminate burning of rookeries, and was proud of the fact that his rookery on Babel Island had never been purposely burnt while he was the owner. In a letter to the Board he said: "Think it out, its not natural to have your home burnt out, a bird has intelligence"

(AOT AA 612/21/1, H. J. Holloway to Chairman of ABPB, 29 May 1937). In the early 1950s muttonbirders, through the Flinders Island Council, requested permission to burn their rookeries in Franklin Sound each year at the end of May (after the autumn rains) under police supervision (AOT AA 612/22/5, Secretary of ABPB to FIC Clerk, 31 May 1951). Permission was granted because experts, such as Dominic Serventy, had advised that the most appropriate way to get rid of the dense growth of *Poa* tussock was by means of fire during the growing period.

Since then research has shown that although fire does allow burrows to be easily located, it stimulates the growth of native fire-weeds such as *Senecio capillifolius*, and the paper daisy *Helichrysum papillosum*, which overtake tussocks and prevent them from colonising burnt areas for up to ten years. These fire-weeds grow densely, and together with the large amount of dead wood they produce each year during the summer, are just as much a nuisance to the muttonbirders as are thick areas of tussocks. The natural process is for the *Poa* tussocks to progressively recolonise the areas covered with fire-weed. Muttonbirders have learnt that they cannot have an innocuous fire. The last purposely lit fire on Great Dog Island was in 1985 when several shed holders burnt their rookery under the supervision of the Department of Parks, Wildlife and Heritage.

MUTTONBIRDING FROM 1940 to 1950

During the early 1940s the number of sheds and muttonbirders decreased, resulting in a corresponding decrease in the number of muttonbirds caught. However, from 1944 the number of sheds being worked remained static as the number of muttonbirders almost doubled, as follows:

1942 — 33 sheds and 123 licences sold;
1943 — 36 sheds and 108 licences sold;
1944 — 37 sheds and 137 licences sold;
1945 — 34 sheds and 160 licences sold;
1946 — 40 sheds and 199 licences sold;
1947 — 39 sheds and 189 licences sold;
1948 — 37 sheds and 208 licences sold;
1949 — 31 sheds and 189 licences sold;
1950 — 17 sheds and 89 licences sold;

The decrease in the number of sheds from the beginning of the Second World War to 1943 can be attributed to several shed holders joining the military forces, the shortage of labour, the condemnation of several sheds, and reputedly to the low price paid by C. H.

Smith and Co. in setting up muttonbirders, who were reluctant to take the price offered. At this time some Aborigines left Cape Barren Island to seek work on mainland Tasmania and did not return (AOT AA 612/21/2, Constable Berryman to Superintendent Eyles, Launceston, 27 May 1942). As shown in Chapter 4, by 1940 the population on Cape Barren Island had dropped to 178 from a peak of 251 in 1933. In February 1944 the population was only 106. Up to March 1943 the Aborigines on Cape Barren Island were still receiving unemployment benefits to supplement their income from muttonbirding. The end of the War resulted in a temporary increase in the number of muttonbirders, but the economic importance of the industry had already been replaced by government welfare payments. The reason for such a large drop in 1950 was the closure of islands in Franklin Sound because of heavy November rains that destroyed many eggs.

The increase in muttonbirders in 1944 was due to changes in the levying of licence fees that season, when one general licence of 5/- was required for any person employed in any capacity on the muttonbird island. Thus many people previously exempt were now required to have a licence and were henceforth included in official statistics, whereas previously only catchers and pluckers were licensed (AOT AA 612/21/2, Secretary of ABPB to Serventy, 4 December 1946). Over the years the licence fee had been considerably reduced, from £1 in 1929 for any person over the age of twelve years, to 10/- in 1936, then to 5/- in 1937 for pluckers over the age of fourteen, to finally a general licence of 5/- in 1944.

Of the 189 muttonbirders who bought licences in 1947, 116 were Aborigines. The breakdown of ethnic origin for the various islands was Babel Island Aborigines 86 and non-Aborigines 3, Great Dog Island 15 and 36, Little Dog Island 1 and 12, Little Green Island 14 and 2, and Chappell Island 17 and 2. No Aborigines held sheds on Great and Little Dog Islands. Three of the four sheds on Little Green Island and all on Chappell Island were worked by Aborigines. There are no figures for Babel but it may be assumed that the majority of sheds were worked by Aborigines (AOT AA 612/22/3, Constable Johnson to ABPB, 10 May 1947). The only women shed holders were Phyllis Holloway, Doris Robinson and Molly Robinson, all on Great Dog Island. The situation in 1949 was very similar with all twelve shed holders on Great Dog and three on Little Dog Islands being non-Aborigines. Two of the three shed holders on Little Green Island, all four on Chappell Island, and twelve of the fourteen on Babel Island were held by Aborigines. Only three of the shed holders on Great Dog Island still held the shed for which they were listed in 1922 (when names of shed holders are first known), namely A. Cook, George Davey and V. Willis. The other former owners were not listed for any other shed in the Furneaux Group in 1948.

The catches during the war years were regarded as good, with high prices paid by the canning factory and by C. H. Smith and Co., which was the principal buyer on Flinders Island. In 1942 the price obtained by the muttonbirders was £1 per 100 birds. The retail price in Launceston was £1/7/6 per 100 birds, or a gross profit of 33 percent from which freight costs, insurance and handling charges were deducted. The value of the industry to the muttonbirders alone was said to be in the vicinity of £8,000 per annum (AOT AA 612/22/3, ABPB Internal Memorandum, 20 September 1945). By 1950 the price had risen to £2/10/- per 100 birds, possibly due to a shortage of birds. Feathers and oil continued to be the main by-products, with the feathers sold to mills in Sydney and Melbourne, including Kimpton's, which had been buying feathers for several years:

We had the muttonbirders come over here and said we've got a muttonbird feather here, it's off a muttonbird and so I thought we'll try some, so we bought some and we found the muttonbird feather a very good feather. That was back about 1937 (Ray Boxer, Manager, Kimpton's Feather Mill, Melbourne, interview).

Fat was also collected for the first time in many years, by rendering down the offal and the skin of skinned birds. Most of it was produced on the islands in Franklin Sound where the shed holders decided to make use of the skins after producing skinned birds for the local canning factory. From eleven 44 gallon drums first collected in the 1938 season, production increased to 95 drums in 1942 and ceased after 1943 when 31 drums were filled. Production recommenced several years later and in 1954, 49 drums were produced, half coming from Great Dog Island. However, there was weak demand for it, and it was largely bought by merchants in Launceston who probably used it in manufacturing soap and in fellmongery. By way of comparison, the production of oil was between 30 and 120 44 gallon drums, whilst between 177 and 505 bags of feathers were produced (Appendix 5).

Shipping Around the Islands

The muttonbirding families who went to Babel Island frequently faced difficulty in getting there due to uncertain shipping. Often the start of the season was missed because the boat was late (AOT AA 612/21/2, Muttonbird Season Reports, 1940-1945). Then it usually did not return until the end of the season when it did two or more trips to pick up people, barrels of muttonbirds and other by-products. The shipping problems stemmed largely from the remoteness of Babel Island, the expense of providing a shipping service, the typically rough sea conditions confronted when handling cargo at the island, and the

unknown sea conditions in the passage to Babel Island through the Pot Boil off the southeastern tip of Flinders Island. The Pot Boil was sometimes impassable, and ships had to sail up the west and then down the east coasts of Flinders Island to reach Babel Island.

Things improved in the late 1940s when the *Shearwater*, owned by Frank Jackson, entered the trade. Skippered by his son, Les Jackson, the *Shearwater* made its maiden voyage on 3 November 1948 (Francis Rhodes, *Shearwater* Log). It was built at Port Cygnet in Tasmania (Cooper 1959: 62) especially for the island trade, because of the unsatisfactory service being operated under government subsidy by the Holyman Bros. at that time. It brought a shipping service back to Whitemark, which had remained unserved for a considerable period (Leedham Walker interview). The boat made many trips to and from the muttonbird islands before it was wrecked at Ninth Island off the northeast coast of Tasmania in August 1962. The year 1949 is typical of the trips it made (Table 11).

On reaching Babel Island everyone helped with getting the barrels to the water's edge. In loading them onto dinghies or other small work-boats for ferrying to the ship, several of the muttonbirders were paid a wage of 15/-. One typical loading consisted of 23 barrels of which one contained 390 birds, eight 400, three 410, one each 420, 440, 470 and 480, two 490, one 500, and four 510 (Francis Rhodes, *Shearwater* Log, 17 May 1950). Often the work was dangerous and wet, with men in the water frequently being washed by waves (Adam-Smith 1983: 106), but they were accomplished at their work:

- If the boat come in there would be one from each shed help to load that boat. There were two entirely different methods of loading. They were all from dinghies but the *Colloboi* never used to load their boat from the side, whereas Nichols used to load his boat from the rear. I can remember some of the names like Vic Hardy, Jack Lawson. They used to go in any weather, nothing was too rough for them. When the waves used to stand up higher than the windfall, they would wait in the dinghy, and as soon as one wave dipped they up the barrel and get it on and be riding nose to the wind. They always dropped their anchor out so just outside the breaks and let it in on a line. If it got too rough they would pull it out on the line then let it come back in when it slowed (David Rhodes interview).

Table 11. Log Entries for the *Shearwater* during the 1949 Muttonbird Season.

Date	Comments
17 March	Arrived Lady Barron and loaded for Babel
18	Left for Babel and Storehouse
19	Left Babel for Lady Barron
20	Left Lady Barron for Babel, discharged Gulch and Sellars Point
21	Worked Hawks Nest, Brodies and Gulch
22	Worked West Beach and left for Palana
27	Left Lady Barron 2 pm, worked Big Dog, anchored
28	Left Big Dog loaded wood for Walter Beeton, left 2 pm Chappell I. Worked Everett & H. Beeton, landed Jim Beeton & reached WM [Whitemark] 11 pm.
12 April	Left for Babel (from Lady Barron) via Dog I, cleared 2 pm arrived Babel 6 pm, anchored Cat Island passage
13	Worked Hawks Nest & Gulch; anchored Gulch
14	Worked West Beach, anchored
15	Good Friday, left Babel Island 11 am
16	Left Lady Barron 1130 for Chappell I. landed JCE 70 casks and left for Launceston 5.30 pm
24	Left WM 7.30 am for Chappell I and Cape Barren Lady Barron (from WM)
25	Left for Babel (from LB [Lady Barron]) 3 pm arrived Babel West Beach 6.30 pm, anchored
26	Loaded birds and feathers, anchored West Beach
27	móved to Hawks Nest loaded and returned to West Beach, anchored
28	Left West beach 7 am, took sick persons on board arrived LB 11 am
29	Loaded fat Great Dog island, back to Lady Barron
8 May	Went to Chappell (from WM) loaded W. Beeton and left parts at Badger, onto Cape Barren loaded goods, anchored Long Island
9	Landed W. Beeton goods at Big Hill run, discharged at LB left 2 pm for Babel anchored West Beach 5.30 pm
10	Loaded birds W Beach GHT, Brodies Hawks Nest & MM's, anchored Cat I
11	Loaded and left for Barren I., land at 12 noon, arrived and discharged at Corner 7 pm onto Lady Barron and arrived 10 pm
12	Discharged and left for Babel at 10.50 am, arrived Babel 2 pm, started loading SE Beach, loaded till 10 pm
13	Started loading 7 am, moved to Gulch and completed and left Babel 2 pm arrived Lady Barron 5.30 pm
14	Discharged and picked up fat and Holloways & birds at PAK. Big Dog back to Lady Barron
16	Left Lady Barron 1145, Cape Barren 1.30 pm. Discharged birds and left 2 pm for Hobart
18	Sold Birds
19	Sold Birds
20	Cleared ship

(Source: Francis Rhodes, Flinders Island)

The *Shearwater* was licensed to carry passengers to and from the muttonbird islands, particularly Babel Island, where Frank Jackson owned several sheds and had built a processing factory at the Gulch in the southwestern corner of the island. The maximum rates for freight were set by the Prices Commissioner in Hobart under the Prices Act, 1948. In 1952 the freight for muttonbirds in casks per 100 birds was 4/9 to and from Whitemark, 5/- from islands of the Furneaux Group other than Whitemark, and 10/- from Babel Island. A similar scale of fees applied to oil, feathers and empty casks. Each season Les Jackson would make one or two trips to Hobart where he would sell muttonbirds from his boat. Sales were usually brisk, but he was glad to be "sold out, thank Christ" (Francis Rhodes, *Shearwater* Log, 3 April 1951), and to be on his way north again.

Some Problems for the Muttonbirders

The end of the 1940s was marked by resentment of muttonbirders towards those who owned more than one shed. In 1949 one non-Aboriginal farmer on Flinders Island with a shed on Great Dog Island, had purchased another on Babel Island and set up an Aborigine to work it. His total catch from both sheds was said to be 69,000 birds (AOT AA 612/22/4A, Trooper Bailey to Superintendent Canning, Launceston, 4 May 1949). Similarly, an Aboriginal woman had one shed on Chappell and two on Babel Islands. Her total catch was around 60,000 birds. According to the dissatisfied muttonbirders, only married members of a family should have sheds because, if the sheds fell into too few hands, "then the small man will be forced to sell". The Animals and Birds Protection Board was against the trend towards monopolies but could not prevent ownership of sheds changing, particularly if Aborigines did not have enough money to upgrade their sheds to meet health regulation standards. The Board was concerned for their economic and social welfare, and attempted as much as possible within the regulations to prevent monopolies.

The attitude of resentment held by some Aborigines was a reflection on the apparent decline of the industry at this time in the one instance, and recovery on the other. The number of birds caught in the 1949 season on Babel and Chappell Islands was the lowest since records first began in 1935 (Appendix 3). Multiple ownership of sheds was restricted mainly to those islands where non-Aboriginal entrepreneurs were acquiring sheds from the Aborigines. This issue is discussed in detail below. In contrast, on Great Dog Island, catches between 1947-48 were the highest on record. The twelve shed owners on the island were all non-Aborigines, and had been entrenched there for a number of years. The records on shed owners over the years show that they were not

under the same pressure to sell their sheds, because they generally had additional income to muttonbirding and could stave off the financial pressures.

The health inspector and the local policeman continued their rounds of inspecting the sheds and generally found conditions only just satisfactory. The worst sheds in terms of cleanliness and disrepair were on Chappell and Babel Islands (AOT AA 612/22/3, Health Inspector D'Alton to Director of Public Health, 29 April 1940). Six years later in 1946 according to local Constable Johnson, they were a disgrace. This could be attributed to the age of the structures, the remoteness of the two islands, and the expense of maintaining buildings in remote localities compared to that on the islands in Franklin Sound. At a meeting held at Sheffield (in northern Tasmania), the Animals and Birds Protection Board adopted a policy that "no drastic interference with the half-caste birders should take place" (AOT AA 612/22/3, ABPB meeting, Sheffield, 10 August 1945). It recognised that the conditions of the living quarters left much to be desired and more hygienic methods of handling the birds were desirable. It instructed the Chairman to take up the problems with the Minister for Agriculture.

In 1949 the local policeman stated in his annual report on the season that many of the sheds were not in a fit state to be used another year, and would have to be renewed (AOT AA 612/22/4A, Constable Hollis to ABPB, 28 June 1949). The following year the Animals and Birds Protection Board notified all shed owners that sheds had to conform with the requirements of the health regulations prior to 1 September 1950, or they would not be issued with a licence for the 1951 season (AOT AA 612/22/4A, Secretary of ABPB to Commissioner of Police, 15 March 1950). The deadline was put in place because, under the regulations of the Animals and Birds Protection Act, 1928 no person was permitted on a muttonbird rookery from 1 September until the season opened. A health inspector was to visit the sheds during this period, but it gave people little time to repair their sheds, particularly those on Babel Island which was difficult to reach.

Several other issues in these years concerned muttonbirders. In 1941 the Animals and Birds Protection Board canvassed the suggestion of Constable Berryman of Flinders Island to limit the catch of muttonbirds to 10,000 per shed. The reasons were to protect the muttonbirds from over-harvesting and to prevent over-supply of the market. The problem of over-harvesting, or 'being worked out' as it was locally termed, worried authorities. However, only some of the shed holders were in favour of a catch limit and the idea was soon dropped. In particular the intercession of the Second World War, when many of the regular muttonbirders joined the military forces, was seen as beneficial as it would give the rookeries "partial rest, the birds not having been molested" (AOT AA

612/22/3, Constable Berryman to Superintendent of Police, Launceston, 11 May 1944). The catch limit notion was taken up again in 1946, and at a meeting of all shed owners on Great Dog Island a limit of 14,000 per shed was proposed. This quota would not have limited the catch much but would have placed all the shed owners on an equal footing, because the size of the individual rookeries varied considerably. However, the system was not introduced.

Other issues included, an application from a non-Aborigine to graze cattle on Chappell Island which was refused;. G. Maynard of Cape Barren Island, applied to erect a shed on Rum Island, but was advised that for half the cost of a new shed he could buy and restore one on Babel Island. In September 1945 two men went with the policeman to Chappell Island to grub a small trial section of barilla which was stated to be overtaking the muttonbird burrows, but when Constable Johnson returned several months later, he was disappointed to find no new burrows had been dug in the cleared section; two Robinson brothers were fined 10/- in the Whitemark court for working their rookery on Little Dog Island with dogs (AOT AA 612/22/3, Secretary of ABPB to Commissioner of Police, 7 May 1947).

Packs of dogs were said to be running loose on all the commercial islands during the season, killing "thousands of old birds" (AOT AA 612/22/3, Constable Fleming to Secretary of ABPB, 14 April 1948) even though prior to the 1949 season, regulations prohibited dogs on a muttonbird rookery (*Tasmanian Government Gazette* 1 December 1948: 3214). A number of muttonbirders complained about the restriction but had no valid argument to support their case.

The new regulations also required a person who bought a commercial licence to enter a return on the number of muttonbirds taken under the licence. This allowed for a much more accurate estimate of the effects of harvesting on the total number of chicks present on the rookeries, an essential first step towards better management of the industry by the Animals and Birds Protection Board.

The other major event in the 1940s was the heavy rains in November 1949 which flooded rookeries on Great Dog, Little Dog and Little Green Islands and resulted in a suspension of commercial muttonbirding. These rains were reported to be unprecedented in living memory. At Lady Barron 5.5 inches (140 mm) were recorded for the month, with most of it falling within a few days following 21 November when the muttonbirds were beginning to lay (AOT AA 612/22/4A, Serventy to Secretary of ABPB, 20 January 1950). Serventy recommended that a limit of 12,000 birds per shed be placed on Great

Dog, 10,000 on Little Dog and 4,000 on Little Green Island. The local policeman, however, recommended that the season be closed for the year. The Animals and Birds Protection Board, after some discussion and reconsidered advice from Serventy, decided to close the season. It was the first time in the history of muttonbirding that a season had been closed. Babel and Chappell Islands were less affected by the rains and were opened, partly because the Aborigines who mainly went muttonbirding on Chappell and Babel Islands depended greatly on the season to get by for the rest of the year.

The Transit Hut

Aborigines living on Cape Barren Island who went muttonbirding on Babel Island, bought with them all their chattels, including domestic pets and poultry. Usually the same trading boat that picked them up from Cape Barren Island would also sail for Babel Island, stopping off at Lady Barron for one or two days, or sometimes longer, to load supplies of salt, barrels and other items required for the season, before proceeding. While at Lady Barron the passengers camped around the township. In bad weather up to a week could be lost waiting for it to improve, as in the 1938 season when 98 people camped for five days in the scrub (FIC Minutes, 7 May 1938):

We'd come down to Lady Barron, pitch tents, camp down there. Then we'd wait for the weather to become fine. We'd go out on the trading boat, we had the *Shearwater* to take us out. We'd take all our stuff down and load her. It was a hassle then in them days. We were only bits of kids. I remember dad pitching the tent down there, big open fire with two forky sticks, so put a rod across so could boil a kettle. It was good in them days though, because everybody sort of joined in, there was camps around everywhere, it was good, but not now (Fay Newall interview).

Aborigines had probably camped at Lady Barron since they first began working Babel Island in the 1890s. Frequent complaints were raised about them camping "under the stars". In 1927 the Department of Public Health asked the Council to provide adequate toilets at Lady Barron for the Aborigines (FIC Minutes, 8 October 1927). The Council's response was to put up notices stating that no one was permitted to cut down scrub, litter the ground with empty bottles, tins and other rubbish, or create a nuisance, or they would be prosecuted.

Municipal councillors hid their resentment of the Aborigines by expressing concern for public health during "the miserable time these people had awaiting transport to their destination (Babel Island)" (FIC Minutes, 7 May 1938). Henry Joseph Holloway was particularly distressed, because the Aborigines had set up camp on foreshore crown land opposite his home. Several years previously, when his family had complained about Aborigines camping there, the Council had determined that, on the receipt of a report from the police, it would write to the Minister for Lands suggesting that the boat taking the Aborigines either to or from Babel Island should not be allowed to stop at Lady Barron (FIC Minutes, 30 January 1936). Nothing came of this, and as the Aborigines seem destined to camp each muttonbird season, the persistent Holloway then wanted them moved 2 km away to Yellow Beach, where there was said to be plenty of water and firewood (FIC Minutes, 23 June 1939). It was also pointed out at that Council meeting that the beach where the Aborigines were encamped was the closest swimming and picnic spot for locals and their presence prevented locals from using it. The present non-Aborigines of Flinders Island strongly deny that anti-Aboriginal racism has ever existed, although it pervades the Council minutes in most instances when matters concerning Aborigines were raised.

With help from a petition signed by local residents, the Council won its fight with the Minister for Lands, and the camp was moved about half-way towards Yellow Beach in August 1939. A large tin shed was built as a shelter and firewood supplied for a total cost of £100 (AOT LSD 51[4]). It remained in use until the late 1950s, and according to Marge Mansell, who was born on Cape Barren Island, it was very basic:

- Mostly the women slept inside and we had to make a fire outside to boil our billies. Men would sleep under the bushes for the night under little camps they had built and it all depended on the weather. Sometimes we would be there for two or three days, other times be there for only one night. Then Eric Robinson or Billy Holloway, they used to pick our gear up from the boat when we left Cape Barren, take it along to the tin shed, then they'd pick us up again the next morning and take us back to the wharf, we would load up again for Babel (Marge Mansell interview).

For the Aborigines, there was no alternative to camping. The government built them a shed but the non-Aborigines still came up with objections, chiefly the health risks stemming from deplorable living conditions. At the end of the season the Aborigines camped even longer, and often not at the shed but down by the foreshore at Gunter's Bay, in the middle of Lady Barron. According to local non-Aborigines, they always

long out-stayed their welcome. Derek Smith, a contemporary employee of C. H. Smith and Co., relates a vivid story which probably exemplifies the tension between the two groups:

After the birding was the funny time when they come back and they had a few bob. There was brawls and bloody fights. They used to come back from the pub and they'd be in the scrub with these big fires going and having the time of their life. George Nicholls, he was an ex-Army Major, "By gad old man", and they kept him awake one night so he appeared very majestically on the balcony on that concrete house [one of the "Terraces"] on the corner you know, and he screams out "Silence you bastards"! There was a moment break in the chorus down in the scrub and they started up again. So he drew the side arm and fired about five volleys into the scrub down there and after that there was very quiet (Derek Smith interview).

The Flinders Island Council asked the Department of Public Health to intervene. The Department replied that it was a very difficult problem and suggested the aid of the police, who said it was not their responsibility (FIC Minutes, 11 April 1942). As no one had any solutions, the Council suggested that the Aborigines should be returned to Cape Barren Island promptly, or that the canning factory which employed a number of them should provide decent accommodation (FIC Minutes, 3 July 1943).

By 1951 the locals had become more tolerant of the idea of Aborigines camping on their door-steps, although they continued to find new objections, again voicing [ostensible] concerns for the well-being of the Aborigines. In 1951 it was the lack of a fireplace in the 'tin shed' for Aborigines to cook and dry out their clothes (FIC Minutes, 6 November 1951). In April 1954 some 30 people, including pregnant women, were encamped. From this time on, however, the number of people in transit to Babel Island steadily declined as many of the sheds on Babel Island were condemned by the Department of Health and were not refurbished due to the high cost of repairs. So the 'tin shed' fell into disuse, and the local controversy died away.

MUTTONBIRDING FROM 1950 to 1955

Through the early 1950s muttonbirding continued to be an important industry for the Furneaux Group. This period coincided with a general expansion of farming on Flinders Island through a land clearance scheme that saw the population grow steadily to 1,000

people. In the 1951 season 33¹/₂ 44 gallon drums of fat were collected, valued at £9 per drum. The price paid for muttonbirds was lowest on Babel Island at £3 per 100 birds compared with £3/10/- to £5 per 100 for birds from the other islands. The reasons were due to the higher freight costs from Babel Island. The muttonbirders who were mostly Aborigines, could do nothing about the price because they were locked into selling to buyers who knew they could not sell to anyone else. In 1953 198 commercial muttonbirders caught 512,937 birds, and produced 52 drums of oil, 20 drums of fat and 317 chaff bags of feathers, worth altogether £30,612. The price obtained for the birds was £4/10/- per 100 on Babel Island, and £5/10/- per 100 on Great Dog Island and other commercial islands. The oil and fat were worth £11 per drum each, and the feathers were sold for £12 per bag. The following season, 1954, was even better, and considered one of the best for many years with a price achieved of £7 per 100 birds. The number of licensed muttonbirders also increased by 15 to 213.

Continued interest in the industry was shown by both Aborigines and non-Aborigines who applied to build sheds on the main muttonbirding islands, and even on Goose Island. Their applications were refused. In contrast Jack Cruse of the Sea Packing Co., which was in partnership with C. H. Smith and Co., was permitted to build six new sheds on Chappell Island while Roy Goss, who had been muttonbirding on the island for many years, but had an abrasive personality, was refused permission to build two sheds. Cruse was an easy-going individual who set up Aborigines to sell back to him, whereas the Animals and Birds Protection Board considered that Goss was exploiting the industry by renting out the sheds to Aborigines for 2,000 birds per shed (AOT AA 612/23/8, Constable McIntyre to Secretary of ABPB, 12 May 1954). Notwithstanding that Tom Langley was doing the same on Babel Island, the Animals and Birds Protection Board suggested that the principle of one shed per owner be rigorously applied, but it never was. The Aborigines complained about the high rentals on Babel Island, stating that in the past the island had been more or less theirs, but in recent years they had no option but to work for people who controlled the sheds (AOT AA 612/23/8, Cruse to Secretary of ABPB, 16 June 1954). Many of the Aboriginal muttonbirders did not have the finance to upgrade their sheds. Over several years they sold them and became hired hands for the new owners. In the 1952 season, of 17 sheds on Babel Island, 4 were owned by Tom Langley, 3 by Frank Jackson and 1 by C. H. Smith and Co.

To overcome the deficiencies in the condition of the sheds, a large amount of money was spent on renovations and new sheds. Before the 1951 season, Frank Jackson who was also one of the major buyers of muttonbirds built several sheds at the Gulch on Babel Island. Described as being "in the birding game for all he can get out of it" (AOT AA

612/23/7, Constable Bailey to Secretary of ABPB, 24 February 1953), he erected a processing factory at the Gulch to process his own birds and the pre-plucked birds he purchased from Aboriginal shed owners. His purpose was to properly grade the birds by using an "up-to-date salting and packing shed", with proper cooling and water supply, drainage and fly-proof processing rooms (AOT AA 612/22/5, Jackson to Chairman of ABPB, 16 May 1950). Because no one was permitted on the islands after 1 September each year, he requested permission in 1950 to stay on the island with his carpenter and the labourers employed in building the complex. Prior to the 1951 season he brought over a jeep, as he intended to do as many as four trips a day around the sheds and back to the factory. Initially there was some controversy concerning its use in such a fragile sandy environment, but as it was only to be driven along tracks recently constructed by the Department of Public Works, permission was granted (AOT AA 612/22/5, Constable McIntyre to Superintendent Canning, Launceston, 27 December 1950). To facilitate loading, a ramp was built to enable the barrels to be rolled from the factory directly onto the *Shearwater*. The buildings were up in time for the 1951 season, and in that year Jackson processed and froze some 51,500 birds in his new factory.

However, the poor condition generally of many sheds on the muttonbird islands reflected the lack of regular maintenance and demonstrated the need for continual supervision of the industry. The lack of any maintenance in the 1950 season, when only Babel and Chappell Islands were worked, was a major contributing factor to decline. In his annual inspection, Health Inspector Parker condemned two of the three sheds on Chappell Island, one of the four sheds on Little Green Island, and two of the fifteen sheds on Babel Island. Several sheds required such major works as a new concrete floor, and nearly all had to be made fly-proof. The burden placed upon muttonbirders to upgrade their sheds, and the enforcement of the provisions of the Animals and Birds Protection Act, was said to have "a good effect on the shed holders and they will now realise that their past haphazard methods must not be continued" (AOT AA 612/22/5, Constable Hanlon to Superintendent of Police, Launceston, 12 March 1951). However, the attitude of the muttonbirders, health inspector and police towards upgrading their sheds was illustrated in March 1951 when rough weather prevented the local policeman from visiting Babel Island and issuing licences to the muttonbirders. When the police boat finally arrived at the end of March, the accompanying health inspector was forced to pass all the sheds although many were substandard, as the muttonbirders had already begun to work, and not passing the sheds would have caused more trouble than it was deemed to be worth.

The problem of access to the muttonbird islands outside the season was also resolved when the Animals and Birds Protection Board allowed people access to them from 10 February instead of 10 March. But it still did not allow landing between 1 September and 10 February. This seriously inconvenienced one muttonbirder whose shed was one of two destroyed in a fire on Great Dog Island in the 1951 season, and who wished to build a new one during the banned period. His request was refused, on the ground that, if permission was given, it would open the flood gates to other applicants (AOT AA 612/22/5, Secretary of ABPB to V. Willis, 31 May 1951). Six other people who were granted approval in 1951 to build new sheds (three of them on Chappell Island, two on Great Dog Island and one on Babel Island) were advised to contact the police, who would inform them when they were permitted to carry out the work.

As a result of the fire in April 1951 on Great Dog Island, Roy Goss, one of the muttonbirders who had lost a shed, took his family to East Kangaroo Island, off Whitemark. There, he caught 1,400 birds for commercial purposes. This island was a favourite non-commercial rookery because it was free of snakes, and the taking of birds for commercial purposes was strongly resented. The following year commercial muttonbirding was not permitted by regulation, and the island was reserved for the taking of muttonbirds for private use.

The question of being allowed to take pets to the islands during the season came up frequently, although under the regulations all such animals were banned. Cats were often cited by muttonbirders as being beneficial, as they allegedly killed snakes. Others claimed that so did Cape Barren geese. Pacific gulls were spoken of as a menace to muttonbirds in shallow burrows (AOT AA 612/22/5, Constable Hanlon to Superintendent of Police, Launceston, 15 June 1951: Report on the 1951 muttonbird season).

During the early 1950s a commercial licence cost 5/- and allowed the holder to take birds from any non-reserved rookery in Tasmania. In practice, commercial muttonbirding occurred only on the Bass Strait islands. Apart from sheds on the muttonbird islands in the Furneaux Group, Hunter Group and New Year Island, the only other locality where birds were taken for commercial sale was from the Petrel Islands in northwest Tasmania. There, in 1952, about 3,200 birds were caught, mainly by weekend muttonbirders, and brought back for sale around the Smithton district. The high price of up to £5 per 100 birds now being obtained led to a suggestion of increasing the licence fees as shed owners could now afford a higher charge. Increasing fees, it was also said, would help to "put down child labour...children are employed and worked from day light to dark for

a few pounds a season" (AOT AA 612/23/6, Constable Hanlon to Secretary of ABPB, 31 March 1952). Whether true or not, most children who went muttonbirding with their parents saw the daily labour as their duty or custom and cheerfully accepted their allocated tasks.

In July 1954 an attempt was made to form a muttonbirders' association exclusively for smaller muttonbird shed owners on Great Dog, Little Dog and Little Green Islands. People like Frank Jackson who were buyers or selles and already had their own markets did not participate in the Association. The Aboriginal muttonbirders on Babel Island were left out ostensibly because they were "not fully acquainted of Association yet" (AOT AA 612/23/8, Neilson to Secretary of ABPB, 24 December 1954). The Association felt that the Animals and Birds Protection Board had too much control over their industry, and wanted the Board "to inform the Assn., at all times, of any mutton bird matters that are to be discussed" (AOT AA 612/23/8, Neilson to Chairman of ABPB, 1 July 1954). The Board, for its part, considered the formation of the Association a step forward and sought to know what plans it had for the general well-being of the industry. It was to learn that the Association had no such plans unlike its 1930s predecessor, which actively sought to find markets for muttonbirds.

Research on Muttonbirds

Between 1930 and 1935, on a small island (that was later named after him) near the township of Lady Barron, Constable Fisher banded about three dozen adult birds each year with celluloid rings. In the egg laying period he searched for banded birds but was unable to locate any. He also punched the webbed foot of young birds, and again did not locate any marked birds on the island in following years. The burrows from which the birds were taken were also recorded (AOT AA 612/22/3, Sergeant Fisher to Secretary of ABPB, 24 August 1942). Simultaneously, Henry Joseph Holloway (the Animals and Birds Protection Board's self-styled "civilian research officer on muttonbirds" (Holloway 1936: 101)) regarded his own research on the little island in the 1930s to be of great interest to the public and the industry. The Board had not officially appointed him and seldom took notice of his findings, basing its decisions instead on reports from Constable Fisher and other local policemen. Holloway's burrow counts and burrow inspections were usually cursory because he felt down very few burrows, whereas the police generally were more thorough in their investigations. Nevertheless, Holloway recognised well before the government that research was a vital component of the muttonbird industry. In one instance he asked the Animals and Birds Protection Board to send bands to be affixed to muttonbirds, rather than having to rely on the inaccurate

marking method of puncturing the web of the foot (AOT AA 612/22/2, H. J. Holloway to Chairman of ABPB, 29 May 1937).

The gathering of data on muttonbirds in order to ensure better control of the industry was first mooted officially in 1933 (AOT AA 612/22, ABPB Internal Memorandum, 1933). The suggestion was to use the services of the CSIR, but that body had no personnel available for the task. The alternative was to ask the University of Tasmania to commission a student "wanting to perform some practical outdoor work as part of the preparation of a thesis in biology". The proposal paid no consideration to the practicalities of researching muttonbirds, of which virtually nothing was known, and fell through. Though the priorities of the Board in the 1930s were shaped by a desire to gain a measure of control over the industry, some opportunistic research did occur. Disease in muttonbirds was investigated. Limey birds had been reported in the 1930 season (AOT AA 612/22, Constable Fisher to Superintendent Lonergan, Launceston, 23 September 1930). Some people maintained that the sickness was due to a recent heat wave, but according to Constable Fisher the offensive smell emitted and the pinkish colour of the flesh suggested other causes which were not discovered until the 1950s.

In 1945 the Animals and Birds Protection Board made a decision to then investigate the biology of the muttonbird and associated factors such as soil types in the rookeries (AOT AA 612/22/3, Chairman of ABPB to Attorney-General, 19 September 1945). Ways and means of protecting and encouraging the industry through research were long overdue. The Premier wrote to the Prime Minister who referred the request onto the Fisheries Division of the CSIR. The services of Dr Dominic Serventy, an expert on seabirds, were offered. Serventy had corresponded with the Board for several years previously over the large scale mortality of muttonbirds that regularly occurred along the east coast of Australia. He was considered to have an appropriate background for the research required, and a basic knowledge of the industry. In March 1946 the Animals and Birds Protection Board invited him to Flinders Island to see for himself the local environment of the muttonbird and the industry. Twelve months later, Serventy paid his first official visit to the islands.

The initial response of Serventy was that the most important question to answer was whether or not the annual total catch was excessive. With respect to the general scientific work, he felt that this could probably be handled by an amateur such as a keen local man. However, it soon became clear that the task required dedicated research with full support by the government. It was impossible to study the biology of the muttonbird on a casual basis, as John Gould, Bishop Montgomery and others had tried to do in the past. In

March 1947 Serventy began the first scientific banding study of the muttonbird, which culminated in almost 100,000 birds being banded by the 1960s (Serventy 1957, 1961).

On his departure from Fisher Island in March 1947, Serventy left a list of instructions concerning tasks for the local policeman to complete. He met members of the Animals and Birds Protection Board in Hobart and informed them of the results of his initial research. The Board agreed that he was the best qualified person in Australia to do the research and that he should come back next year, as it was obvious that the survey of the industry and muttonbirds could not be completed in one season. Serventy was keen to return. In his report he recommended that a small hut be erected on Fisher Island to facilitate more intensive research on the muttonbird. By the time he returned with a small team in November 1948 the hut had been built at a cost of £300, which was shared between the Animals and Birds Protection Board and CSIR. It was not known at this time that the research to be embarked upon would lead the world in seabird studies and studies of ecological processes in general (Bradley *et al.* 1991: 59).

Initially, the muttonbirders showed little enthusiasm for the research. Serventy banded chicks on most of the commercial rookeries and asked each shed owner to return any bands they found to enable him to estimate the proportion of the birds taken by the industry, and to calculate the number taken from each shed's rookery. In the words of Serventy:

The purpose of the investigation is intended solely for the betterment of the industry, in other words, it is entirely in the interests of yourself and others engaged in mutton-birding. Therefore I look to you personally, and all the people employed in your shed, to co-operate whole-heartedly in the work (AOT AA 612/22/5, Circular Letter from Chairman of ABPB to muttonbirders, n. d.).

The muttonbirders feared, however, that if they returned the rings, the industry could be closed or their catch curtailed (AOT AA 612/22/4, Chairman of ABPB to Commissioner of Police, 22 April 1947). Over the following years Serventy had a constant battle to get muttonbirders to record how many bands they found and to send them in to him. He never won, although by 1951 he thought that the great majority were co-operating. Of course, neglecting to return bands left his research incomplete. Partly due to the apprehensions held by muttonbirders, and the fact that his figures were incomplete, Serventy advised the Animals and Birds Protection Board not to do anything about limiting the catch until the 1950 season. His other main recommendations were to ban

pets from commercial rookeries, and to cease the granting of grazing rights. These recommendations were accepted at a meeting of the muttonbird committee of the Board on 19 July 1948.

Other research projects conducted by Serventy included firing tussocks in plots on Little Green Island, ostensibly to protect the birds against wildfire, but in reality to thin out the cover so burrows could be more easily found by muttonbirders. The burning was a success, although, performed as it was just before the birds returned, it afforded them little protection against predators and the weather. Another project was to dig 103 artificial burrows with a post-hole digger in August 1950 on Little Green Island. The aim was to entice birds back to the hard ground which was thought to have been compacted by the trampling of sheep. At least 66 percent of the holes were occupied later that year when the birds returned but the experiment was never followed up in the long-term.

Each year Serventy returned with assistants to Fisher Island to continue the banding studies on the population of 150 pairs. He found these studies more enjoyable than dealing with the sceptical muttonbirders, who were questioning the expenditure of money on muttonbird research (AOT AA 612/23/7, FIC Clerk to Secretary of ABPB, 20 December 1952). Serventy was a dedicated scientist and a sociable host, and on his field trips he invited friends, including the famous artist Russell Drysdale, and the author, Patsy Adam-Smith. The times he spent in the field on Babel Island and other islands were among his most enjoyable days:

- And he was terribly excited one night. I was one side of a rock. This was on Babel. About four in the morning or something like that. I was one side of the rock, I know I took some photos, biggish rock. They [muttonbirds] were climbing up it for height. I was side on to them whereas he was behind them and they were stumbling on this rock and falling and then two sort of fluttered down together and managed to struggle back up on the back side. He said something but he was so excited that of course his words tumbled together. He wouldn't move. "Quiet". I realised later, well I realised that the only thing he couldn't say was a fairly longish word. Tas Drysdale, who was close to this, "He wants to know if they are fucking" (laughs). He was saying "copulating". He was being nice you see. That word wasn't used in front of women at all then (Patsy Adam-Smith interview).

In 1951 Serventy introduced a statistical form in which he asked the shed owner to record the daily tally of birds taken. Although they were returned, many of the muttonbirders did not take the form seriously and completed it incorrectly, leading Serventy to ask the Board to issue instructions to the muttonbirders on the matter for the 1952 season. The response did not improve. In one case the lack of co-operation in filling in the form and returning bands were contributory factors in the Board's refusal of a shed licence to one Aborigine on Babel Island for the 1953 season (AOT AA 612/23/7, Constable Bailey to Secretary of ABPB, 28 October 1952). Similar problems of unreturned bands also occurred on Trefoil Island, which Serventy visited in early 1953 to band chicks. One year later he was still after bands that were reputedly to be in one of the owner's hands. By 1962 Serventy was trying to entice the muttonbirders to return bands through rewarding them with a special prize of £5 for the 'lucky band'. The first winner was Tom Diprose of Little Dog Island (AOT AA 612/24/13, Secretary of ABPB to Diprose, 1 October 1962). The 'lucky band' incentive was soon discontinued, being replaced by a payment of 6d per band, the cost being shared between the Animals and Birds Protection Board and CSIRO.

In 1968 Serventy retired and the banding program was taken over by the Animals and Birds Protection Board. It was discontinued after the 1976 season and replaced for three years by direct counts of burrow occupancy on Great Dog and Little Green Islands (Skira and Wapstra 1980: 233). By this time the problems of non-commercial muttonbirding were deemed to be more pressing than anything occurring in the industry, and the research that Serventy instigated is now confined to monitoring the population of muttonbirds on Fisher Island.

In 1954 research began on 'limey birds' and other muttonbird ailments. The problem of what caused 'limey birds' was not easily solved and for several years intrigued CSIRO researchers. The cause was eventually traced to bacterial infection which caused blockage of the cloaca. The infection was an ornithosis disease which included the well-known infection called psittacosis, which in the early 1930s had killed several people involved in catching fulmars in the Faroe Islands (Fisher 1952: 382-383). Serventy expressed concern (in 1954) that publication of the results of the investigation into 'limey bird' disease might have an adverse effect on the muttonbird industry if raised in the 'popular press' (AOT AA 612/23/10, Ratcliffe of CSIRO to Secretary of ABPB, 20 April 1956). In reality there was little chance of muttonbirders suffering from the disease because of its low pathogenicity compared to the psittacosis in the Faroe Islands. The veterinarian conducting the research inadvertently caught the disease through laboratory trials, but recovered after several days.

Other important research involved the transfer of chicks from other islands to Fisher Island to find out to which island they returned several years later. Serventy believed this experiment would give him a lead into the rehabilitation of over-harvested rookeries and even the re-population of rookeries which were extinct (AOT AA 612/23/8, Serventy to Secretary of ABPB, 5 April 1954). None of the chicks were ever found again on Fisher Island. Other problems, such as the spread of African boxthorn *Lycium ferocissimum* on Babel Island, did not get quite the same attention. This weed was becoming widespread in the mid-1950s and the view was forming that a concerted effort might soon be needed to check it (AOT AA 612/23/9, Constable Hanlon to Secretary of ABPB, 14 April 1955).

Children and Muttonbirding

It had always been a tradition for children to join their parents in muttonbirding. In the 1895 season on Chappell Island for example, there were 60 children under 10 years of age out of a total population of 147 people (*Examiner* 20 June 1895). The majority were from Cape Barren Island, which was left deserted in March and April except for the schoolteacher and his family. In contrast, on Flinders Island in 1910 it was stated that there were 60 to 70 children between 6 and 14 years of age who had no school to attend (*Examiner* 8 March 1910). Several schools were soon set up on Flinders Island, and for the first half of the twentieth century the main school-holidays on Cape Barren and Flinders Islands coincided with the muttonbirding season. Schools closed in mid-March and reopened in late April-early May. In this way children could join their parents on the muttonbird islands and learn the skills of muttonbirding. Leaving school to go muttonbirding was a thrill for the children:

I loved it. I couldn't wait to get home either (Sharon Hughes interview).

On the islands children helped to cook and look after other children, and did minor tasks, such as chopping off legs and wings of muttonbirds. Although they were a free source of labour, a kind of payment was frequently given when the season finished and everyone returned home:

That child wouldn't get paid but they would get new clothes or whatever was needed (Phyllis Pitchford interview).

A similar story is told by Melvin Everett, who first went muttonbirding in the 1940s:

My first wages, I never even seen it. My grandparents bought me a suit. I was fourteen. Twelve pounds that suit was. That was my whole wage. But it lasted me for six to eight years. She was a good suit because she came from Sydney, Murdochs (Melvin Everett interview).

That first wage was exciting, so much so that most people can remember how it was spent. The emotions of an experienced Aboriginal muttonbirdier like Furley Gardner, were typical, particularly as people were largely unemployed the rest of the year:

And I went up to Whitemark up to Bowman's shop and bought a little china tray. Now it's Royal Doulton for four pounds and I've still got that tray. My very first wage was four pounds, paid by my parents...But the four pound one was quite exciting and I bought this little tray and never even had threepence left over. Paid the whole thing. That's what I did, that's what I wanted. And my parents never went crook at me for doing that. Today, if you're battling for money and I gave one of my kids eight dollars and they went and done that, I could see what they could get a few things for eight dollars rather than just one little thing that they wouldn't use anyway. No they never went crook at me (laughs) (Furley Gardner interview).

While there was work to do on the islands every opportunity to play was taken:

We never had that much time to play around. Every break there was, like say waiting for people to carry the birds in, we'd make a race for the trees or little playhouses we had and we would be there for about five or ten minutes and then we would be called back again. So we used to look forward to the Sundays. Just walking around all over the place because Sunday was the only day everybody dressed up you know. Course, we had a little shop out there too, so we could go to the shop and get some lollies. Go walking around the hills and around other parts of Babel Island like you couldn't do that during the week. So we used to look forward to that and meet all other kids (Furley Gardner interview).

This all ceased with the end of the 'birding holidays', when in 1958 the Flinders Island schools fell into line with the rest of Tasmania. By then the economy of Flinders Island had diversified to the extent that muttonbirding was not as important as previously. There were fewer sheds on the islands and fewer people associated with the industry.

With regard to moving the major annual holidays to Christmas, the Flinders Island Council decided to gauge the feelings of the parents about the matter, but was prepared to recommend to the Education Department that the 'birding holidays' continue as at present for the Cape Barren Island school (*Island News* 24 May 1957).

The Muttonbirders' Association also lobbied for its own interests, stating that the holidays should remain unchanged in order to train children as future muttonbirders; the change would penalise the 30 to 40 children who went muttonbirding; the general education standard in the Furneaux Group was equal to anywhere else in Tasmania, so "why change"?; the land settlement scheme was incomplete and not yet an alternative to muttonbirding; and the time was inopportune for change (*Island News* 21 June 1957). However the Education Department abandoned the 'birding holidays', except for Cape Barren Island (*Island News* 27 September 1957). The change seems to have been welcomed by the majority of parents as exemptions could be applied for to take children muttonbirding. Three families were allowed such exemptions for the 1958 season (*Island News* 14 March 1958). To the present day the Cape Barren Island school still has its main holidays during the muttonbird season, although this is not as significant as it used to be, because only two to four children are affected. The age of the average muttonbirder is over 40 years and very few of their children have taken to muttonbirding as a way of life.

SUMMARY

The Animals and Birds Protection Act, 1928 was the first Act to place the conservation of wildlife in Tasmania on a scientific basis. The Animals and Birds Protection Board was constituted, and soon found much of its time taken up administering the muttonbird industry. Simultaneously the non-Aboriginal muttonbirders formed an association to market their birds. Aborigines were not invited to join because they sold their birds directly to some of the non-Aboriginal muttonbirders or to merchants who set them up.

The Animals and Birds Protection Board's concern for the muttonbird islands led it to resume all the private freehold of 100 acres on Babel Island in 1941. The land was formerly owned by the three Holloway brothers who formed a business trading in muttonbirds and by-products under the trade name "Sokkar". They also operated a canning factory at Lady Barron. In 1941 a new canning factory was constructed at Lady Barron to can muttonbirds and fish. It operated until 1951, canning most of the birds taken off the nearby islands, which were sent to it daily as skinned birds. Meanwhile,

muttonbirds from Babel Island were purchased in the salted form by C. H. Smith and Co.

Despite good prices during the 1940s the number of sheds declined slowly as it became harder to find experienced workers, the expense of renovating or building new sheds increased, the number of people living on Cape Barren Island decreased, and people found more secure employment on Flinders Island.

The period from 1928 was one of government intervention in the muttonbird industry, not only by regulations, but through conservation and scientific research into the muttonbird. For economic reasons, multiple ownership of sheds forced many Aborigines to sell their sheds and become workers for the new owners who were either wealthy residents of Flinders Island or merchants in Launceston. The sheds were leased back to the Aborigines, a situation which tended to lead to exploitation of the muttonbirders who were forced to take whatever price they were offered for their birds. The Animals and Birds Protection Board was concerned for the economic and social welfare of the Aborigines but there was little it could do to alleviate the conditions.

It was much more successful in initiating a biological study of the muttonbird. After more than 100 years of almost indiscriminate harvesting, it was appropriate to investigate how the muttonbird had apparently managed to withstand such ruthless exploitation. After the Second World War, the Animals and Birds Protection Board initiated a long-term research program on muttonbirds. Initially set up to provide a scientific basis for management of the industry, it also gave a fascinating insight into the general biology of the bird.

CHAPTER 10

C. H. SMITH AND CO., A MUTTONBIRD BUYER

[Geoff Smith] Oh, he'd come around at different times wanting to know how they were going. "How's the birds going Mr Grant. You got any bad ones?" "Oh, had one over here," I said. "Better come over and have a look". "Oh yes". I put the fresh brine in, and leave it for a day before I head it up again. "Now make sure it's fit for human consumption. Don't send anything away that's no good". Away he'd go. He wouldn't worry you no more because he knew the job would be done (Arthur Grant interview).

Over the years a number of firms in Launceston bought and sold muttonbirds. C. H. Smith and Co. seems typical of the larger ones that dealt in muttonbirds, and has the distinction of probably being the oldest in the business. This account of C. H. Smith's involvement in muttonbirding is given as an example of how merchants involved with the industry operated. The story of C. H. Smith and Co. is particularly relevant because it became the largest buyer of muttonbirds in the Furneaux Group, and through its subsidiary, Island Stores on Flinders Island, its monopoly was allegedly based on exploitation of muttonbirders, particularly the Aborigines.

Charles Henry Smith formed what is now Australia's oldest ship chandlers in Launceston in 1885 (Smith 1985: 39). Born in England in 1827, he migrated in 1852 to Victoria, and came to Launceston in 1855 as manager for Dalgety and Co., an Australia wide rural produce company (*Examiner* 8 December 1904). In 1884 the company was made into a limited company and the Launceston branch was severed from the parent firm, it then being under the name of Du Croz, Smith and Co. Frederick Augusta Du Croz was a well-known Launceston businessman, and when he retired, the company took the name of C. H. Smith and Co. In fact, the company formed by Charles Smith

was the culmination of an evolving series of businesses that first commenced operating at least as far back as 1837 (*Examiner* 12 March 1932). Its interests once included crayfish, wine and spirits, animal skins, wool, apples and yacca gum. When Smith died in 1904, his sons carried on the business and it has remained in the family ever since. It is still operating, but now deals only in marine chandlery.

FROM FIRST INTEREST IN THE FURNEAUX GROUP TO THE 1930s

Because of his extensive business interests (before and after he formed his own company), Smith had early dealings with some of the inhabitants of the Bass Strait islands, particularly concerning the buying of wool. The company of Du Croz, Smith and Co. paid small advances to the Islanders on their wool clip, one of whom was Edward Bishop of Great Dog Island. Bishop asked for an advance of £150 to purchase a cutter valued at about £300 (C. H. Smith Letter Book, 1855-1871: 267, Smith to Du Croz, 14 August 1865). Smith declined the transaction as Bishop had no security to offer beyond the vessel herself. There is every reason to believe that, even at this time, a trade in muttonbirds was being carried on by Smith, particularly as muttonbirds were the principal cash-crop of the Furneaux Group. In a letter to the Attorney-General, Geoff Smith, a descendant of Charles Smith and manager of the company in the 1930s and for many years afterwards, stated his belief that C. H. Smith and Co. had been interested in muttonbirding since the company's inception (AOT AA 612/21/1, G. P. Smith to Attorney-General, 15 March 1938).

By 1911 salted and smoked muttonbirds, oil, fat and feathers were being purchased and sold from the C. H. Smith and Co. warehouse in Launceston to all parts of Tasmania. Muttonbird oil continued to be purchased by the government railways and fossil fuel oil companies such as the Vacuum Oil Co. In that year C. H. Smith and Co. bought 309 casks of salted muttonbirds, each cask containing some 400 to 450 birds. The price to the muttonbirder was 7/6 per 100 birds (C. H. Smith and Co. Account Journal, 1911-25). The following year 503 casks were purchased. The ownership of the barrels was established by painting each one with the initials of the owner, usually in blue paint. The company also sold smoked birds but they were an insignificant part of the trade. By 1914 tinned muttonbirds from the cannery at Lady Barron were being marketed (*Examiner* 7, 8 April 1914).

The overall trade in muttonbirds during this period was probably around one million birds each season, or about 2,500 casks if each cask held 400 birds (TPP 1908. Number

57: 5). In the 1914 season 2,424 casks were brought into Launceston by the regular trading ketches (*Examiner* 25 May 1914). Thus, C. H. Smith and Co. had about 20 percent of the market. The majority of its purchases appeared to be from non-Aborigines, including Thomas and Samuel Barrett, Captain Dargaville, R. Davey, W. Ferguson, A. Holt, J. Robinson and Alec Ross. Thomas Barrett and Alec Ross were the largest sellers. Purchases from Aborigines appear rarely in the company's Account Journals, suggesting that the Aborigines either sold to other Launceston merchants, or that their consignments were put in with some of the non-Aborigines. Because the company only handled a proportion of the sales, it seems more likely that they sold to other merchants involved in the trade.

Between 1911 and 1925 the overall value to C. H. Smith and Co. of the trade generated by the muttonbird industry, including the export of salted birds to New Zealand, varied from a low of £1,453 in 1911 to a high of £4,904 in 1921 (Table 12). The large annual variation in monetary turnover was no doubt due mainly to seasonal fluctuations in the quality and numbers of muttonbirds rather than costs. The annual costs to the company included the purchase and hire of wooden casks, coopering and repairs, cash advances, advertisements and freight. These costs fluctuated only slightly each year, but every season varied according to the quality and number of muttonbirds in a rookery, with good and bad seasons occurring regularly (Table 9). Quality of presentation was the hardest variable to control and casks with bad birds occurred each season at every shed. They were returned to the muttonbirders, a small amount of money being debited against next year's season as recompense for the company.

In the early 1930s the export trade fell. C. H. Smith and Co. attributed this in part to the "lack of cleanliness" and a lack of "reliability of counts in casks", due to dishonesty on the part of the suppliers (AOT AA 612/21/1, R. N. Smith to Commissioner of Police, 22 December 1933). It was the responsibility of the muttonbirder to mark on his casks the number of birds each cask contained. When opened in Launceston the casks often contained less than the stated count, whilst some of the birds also showed various states of decay, and were therefore unfit for human consumption. R. N. Smith, a descendant of Charles Smith, also claimed that the Muttonbirders' Association (formed on Flinders Island in 1932) successfully kept the merchant's commission at a level that did not provide any incentive to develop new markets. Export markets known to the merchants but not to the Association were therefore not exploited.

The muttonbirders' trade link with the merchants was an essential part of the industry. Apart from C. H. Smith and Co. there were seven other major buyers of muttonbirds, all

of them based in Launceston. These were storekeeper Spencer Morris, merchant Allan Stewart, merchants Law, Duncan and Co., merchants Davidson and French, auctioneers Herd and Co., storekeeper James Beck and ship-owners Holyman and Sons (AOT AA 612/21/1, Sergeant Mansfield to Superintendent Hynes, Launceston, 26 July 1938). Some of these buyers sent samples of birds as far away as France to find new markets. None of the shed owners, apart from the Holloway brothers and the Barretts had the skill and money to find new markets, and even they usually depended on the Launceston merchants to sell their muttonbirds and by-products.

Table 12. Monetary Value of Muttonbirds bought by C. H. Smith and Co., 1911-1925.

Year	Value (£)	Year	Value (£)
1911	1,454	1919	2,298
1912	1,980	1920	3,814
1913	1,510	1921	4,905
1914	2,045	1922	2,681
1915	2,077	1923	1,933
1916	2,698	1924	2,742
1917	4,089	1925	2,763
1918	256		

(Source: C. H. Smith and Co. Account Journals)

Nevertheless, a meeting of the Muttonbirders' Association at Lady Barron on 9 February 1934 discussed better ways of marketing muttonbirds. Ideas ranged from grading muttonbirds to using smaller containers and better presentation, but no action was taken. Another meeting towards the end of the year again discussed marketing and presentation. By now the muttonbirders were generally willing to concede that the fall in export markets was due to poor presentation. But the problem did not disappear and occurred as late as 1977, when muttonbirders from Babel Island travelled to New Zealand to repack 'rusty' (maggoty) birds. In 1931 823 casks valued at £4,430 and comprising 620,000 birds were exported. The corresponding statistics for the next two years were, in 1932, 461 casks at £1,881 comprising 286,400 birds, and in 1933, 335 casks at

£1,526 comprising 227,640 muttonbirds (AOT AA 612/21/1, Minutes of public meeting at Lady Barron, 6 December 1934). According to these figures between 621 and 753 muttonbirds were in each cask, which is impossible for each cask to hold, because on the islands each cask could only contain between 400 and 550 muttonbirds. As it unlikely that the birds were repacked in Launceston the total number of muttonbirds stated above is probably over-estimated or the number of casks under-estimated.

Muttonbirding remained a small but profitable line of business for a company of widely diversified interests for many years. All freight was moved by ships (Plate 10) until the use of aircraft began in 1953. Overseas exports to New Zealand continued in spite of occasional set-backs — as in 1939 and 1941, when the New Zealand government attempted to impose import restrictions on salted birds, which were sold mainly to Maoris for 1/- each. The object of the restrictions was "to conserve overseas funds to meet debt commitments and payments for essential imports" (AOT AA 612/21/1, Prime Minister of New Zealand to Premier of Tasmania, 11 May 1939).

ISLAND STORES

In 1939 C. H. Smith and Co. expanded its Bass Straits interests by forming a local subsidiary at Lady Barron called "Island Stores" (Plate 11). It bought out the local storekeeper, Henry Lockhart, who ran the store which had traded since 1916. At the Lady Barron wharf, the company later rented part of the large fish processing cannery and freezer works built for Holyman's of Launceston. About half a kilometre away from the Lady Barron wharf, Island Stores also owned a complex of two concrete block buildings and a weather-board house overlooking Franklin Sound. Called by locals the "Terraces", the concrete block buildings remain today, but the house, which later was converted into a little shop and home, and eventually an office in the 1980s for the Flinders Island Aboriginal Association, was burnt down in 1990.

In 1939 muttonbirds were frozen and later sold as fresh birds for the first time in the history of the industry. This was done by the Holyman-owned Flinders Island Trading Co., which processed 76,000 muttonbirds in its canning and freezing works. Prior to the 1940 season C. H. Smith and Co. negotiated with the Flinders Island Trading Co. to purchase fresh birds from the islands in Franklin Sound (*Flinders Island News* 15 March 1940). It is most likely that this deal was handled through Island Stores. During the 1941 season, fifteen sheds were not worked, ten of them on Babel Island. Allegations were made that this was due to C. H. Smith and Co., by now the largest handler of muttonbirds in Tasmania, forcing the shed owners who they had set up, to sell only to



Plate 10. The Rawlinna, bought by C. H. Smith and Co. for the muttonbird trade in the Furneaux Group (Source: Nancy Smith).



Plate 11. Part of Island Stores complex at Lady Barron on Flinders Island (Source: Nancy Smith).

them (AOT AA 612/21/2, Constable Berryman to Superintendent of Police, Launceston, 30 May 1941). The company was guaranteeing a miserly advance of 12/6 per 100 birds which had to pay for groceries, casks, salt, freight, licences, boat fares and the wages of employees. Many of the muttonbirders would not sign up and therefore could not get set up for the season. This particularly hurt Aborigines who then held most of the sheds on Babel Island.

The niggardly 1941 advance has to be compared with the return of £1/5/- to £1/12/6 per 100 birds that muttonbirders were getting in 1938. However, it is likely that such tactics by the company contributed to the decline. In the early 1940s there was an exodus of Aborigines from Cape Barren Island to mainland Tasmania seeking work (Appendix 1), while others joined the Australian Army to fight in the Second World War. Any income from muttonbirding was important to Aborigines, so being set up by C. H. Smith and Co., albeit for a small guarantee, would still have been welcome to most. In 1942 the company paid out £1 per 100 salted birds on Babel Island, which was equivalent to £1/7/6 per 100 in Launceston. In 1943 a record was said to have been set for salted birds, when they were sold to C. H. Smith and Co. for £1/5/3 per 100 birds (AOT AA 612/21/2, Constable Smith to Superintendent of Police, Launceston, 1 June 1943). The price dropped slightly during the following seasons but was still over £1 per 100 birds. In 1941 the company estimated that it handled about 75 percent of the total catch.

Island Stores ran a general store and post office, a small canteen and guest house for staff working in the fish processing factory, a butcher's shop, the only bakery on Flinders Island and a taxi service. It employed several local men and women in the various facets of its business. Due to the very rough nature of the dirt roads, Island Stores wore out 19 cars in 20 years, and the corrugated roads made it impossible to hold a conversation in cars (Barbara Langley interview). Occasionally the baker also doubled as the taxi driver. Prior to the season, much taxi business was obtained from the Aborigines who congregated in the transit hut or in the surrounding bush at Lady Barron waiting for the right weather to sail to Babel Island. The majority of customers wanted to be taken to the hotel in Whitemark and returned to Lady Barron several hours later. The muttonbirders had the money for the £2/10/- one-way fare as they were paid in advance for their birds and the by-products of oil and feathers. Many were in debt to the store, but rarely for more than £50. As at 30 June 1958 sundry debts for the financial year amounted to £4,778, owed chiefly by fishermen and local companies or organisations (C. H. Smith and Co. Account Journals 1958).

Derek Smith took over the bakery in the early 1950s and remembers it as generally dilapidated, as were the 'Terrace' buildings. By this time the canning factory was on the verge of closure and there was little incentive to maintain the buildings (Bill King interview). Running the taxi was a welcome source of money:

Well anyway, this day this chap wanted to go to "the 'Mark old man", and I took him up and he gave me five pound and he said "Now you's come back at ten o'clock and picks us up". So I said right-oh. So I arrived back in front of the pub about five past ten, raining like buggery, pulled up under this tree, still there, leans out over the footpath. And this bloke opens the door and he said, "Would it be all right old man if my sister and her little fella comes home with us"? And I said all right, pile in. Everybody seemed to have got in and I said are you right?, said yeah, took off.

Sailing along and going up Martins Hill which is the only sort of reasonable hill on the road between here and Lady Barron, I had to keep changing down and I thought the damn car, there's something wrong with it. Gets back to Lady Barron and I jumped out quick and stood there. And there was eleven people got out of that car including me (laughs). He got his money's worth (Derek Smith interview).

On 21 December 1939 Island Stores commenced the weekly *Flinders Island News*, the island's first newspaper. Much of the copy was hand written and it ran for about four years. The paper featured items on muttonbirding, and local advertisements such as those for H. J. Holloway's 'Sokkar' products, which included "oil-fat for calves etc. and refined oil for human beings". Each season C. H. Smith and Co. set up their usual clients, and being the principal buyer, could negotiate a rate in its favour. At the end of the season the company advertised luxury goods held in Island Stores, confidently expecting that they would sell quickly. One popular item was the radio:

After birding, trade in your wireless set which is not all it should be, on a Super Phillip's Radioplayer, and benefit by the liberal trade-in allowances at the present time. See Island Stores P/L (*Flinders Island News* 15 March 1940).

In 1954 C. H. Smith and Co. received £16,900 from the sale of muttonbirds alone (C. H. Smith and Co. Account Journals, 1954). The prices paid to muttonbirders totalled

£13,327 which included £12,918 for 175,755 muttonbirds at £7/7/- per 100 birds; 15 drums of oil, or 624 gallons at 4/6 per gallon; 8 drums of fat, or 330 gallons at 8/- per gallon; and 15 bags of feathers at 1/3 per pound. Other expenses to the company consisted of purchase and freight to islands of casks and drums (£688); salt (£434); freight of muttonbirds and their products from the islands (£644); repacking wages, purchase of drums, freight on Tasmanian sales, commission and sundries (£1,491); and credit notes and marine insurance (£703). One expense in 1954 which was not included in the profit and loss statements was 5,167 condemned birds at £7/7/- per 100 birds (£379). This loss, 3 percent of the total birds purchased, was of concern to the company, as it reflected on the overall standard of marketing muttonbirds taken in the Furneaux Group. The 1954 season was deemed very good by everyone involved in it (AOT AA 612/24). The profit for 1954 is not stated but would have been small when the expenses were taken out of the money received. The company used its own boat, the *Rawlinna* (Plate 10) to pick up birds from the muttonbird islands, including Babel Island which it visited two or three times during the season. Babel Island was an expensive location to service, and this was the reason for the lower prices paid to muttonbirders there, compared with the prices paid to those working the islands in Franklin Sound.

BUYERS OF MUTTONBIRDS FOR C. H. SMITH AND CO.

Until the 1949 season only three buyers, including C. H. Smith and Co., were operating on the islands, but in that season there were sixteen, with some of them allegedly buying well above the market price (AOT AA 612/22/4A, Trooper Bailey to Superintendent of Police, Launceston, 4 May 1949). In the 1954 season C. H. Smith and Co. processed 30 percent of the 583,038 birds caught in the Furneaux Group. This sudden large decrease from the 1940s, when it bought about 75 percent of the birds, was due to the disappearance from the market of canned muttonbirds, which had made up a significant proportion of the birds processed during the 1940s and early 1950s. One of the buyers was "Honest" Tom Langley who came to Flinders Island on 12 January 1948 to run Island Stores for Geoff Smith. Acting as the muttonbird buyer for Island Stores, he was noted as being unscrupulous in his dealings with the Aborigines, who were his main suppliers. Whilst not denying it, Langley states in his own defence that living on an island cost money:

I know I'm no angel but I said I'm not as bad as those fellows take me. What will I do about it? You start talking their own language. So the next day I am in the shop there and this fellow was complaining about the prices and how it was robbing him and I said, "Look, just a minute. If

you stop your tongue for a moment I'll add it up and I'll tell you exactly what I'm making off this order". Which I did and "Gawd" he said. "You're worse than I thought you was" (laughs) (Tom Langley interview).

A lively character, Langley over the years was the local postmaster, storekeeper, baker, taxi proprietor, town councillor, church warden, agent, fish buyer, muttonbird dealer, hardware merchant, grocer and tailor (*Examiner* 29 July 1987). He began buying birds about 1950 and seems to have first become involved as a potential shed owner in April 1950 when he applied for four licences to erect muttonbird sheds on Babel Island. There were protests from adjoining shed owners who thought that there were not enough birds to supply extra sheds, followed by a petition from Aborigines on Cape Barren Island who did not want one person to have a monopoly of sheds on the island, and his application was refused (AOT AA 612/22/4A, Constable Hanlon to Secretary for Lands, 14 July 1950; Radford to Secretary of ABPB, 14 July 1950). But the extra sheds would have meant employment for those Aborigines who did not have one and who were keen to work in Langley's sheds, so permission was granted the following year for him to erect three sheds. While awaiting permission, Langley erected a shed and bought another one. The one he built was not bolted to the concrete foundation and blew over. According to the local policeman, the shed was a "disgraceful effort by a man of Langley's backing...I would say without a doubt that this is the worst building I have seen erected on any mutton bird rookery" (AOT AA 612/22/5, Constable Hanlon to Superintendent of Police, Launceston, 8 February 1951). The structure had clearly been erected with the least possible outlay of money.

Langley soon earned the nick-name of "Honest Tom". The local police placed little reliance on his promises, and his rapacious nature soon extended to the Aborigines whom he attempted to control. In 1954 he was said to own seven sheds that he attempted to rent out for, 2,000 birds per shed. At a current price of £6 per 100 birds paid on Babel Island that season, Langley would have received £120 per shed, compared to the annual rental demanded by the Lands Department of £4. This was probably the reason why three and possibly four of his sheds were unoccupied in the 1954 season.

The other main buyer for the company was Jack Cruse, a sanguine character who loved dealing with people, a direct contrast to Langley. He first began buying muttonbirds in 1952 from Babel Island, selling them through his Devonport-based company, Tasmanian Freshfoods Pty. Ltd. and a subsidiary, the Mutton Bird Freezing and Packing Company Pty. Ltd. Cruse started a price war with Langley, telling the Aborigines on the island that

"...he was there to protect their interests against Tom Langley" (Tom Langley interview). He bought at the top price of £7/5/- per 100 birds but over-committed and the Mutton Bird Freezing and Packing Company Pty. Ltd. was made bankrupt. In partnership with Geoff Smith and Island Stores, Tasmanian Freshfoods Pty. Ltd. formed Sea Packing Company Pty. Ltd., whose sole purpose was to purchase, pack and freeze fresh muttonbirds at Lady Barron. Half the shares were issued to Tasmanian Freshfoods Pty. Ltd., and a quarter each to C. H. Smith and Co. and Island Stores. For sales tax purposes the company was registered as "mutton bird processing, yacca gum crushing and processing, fish merchants".

Jack Cruse ran the new company from Devonport and Launceston, and the capital to buy the muttonbirds was entirely raised by him. Tom Langley was made the island buyer. On the formation of the company, Cruse wrote to Langley in genial terms:

...as we should know most of the answers in the Islands, spending so many years scheming and trying to outwit each other through opposition buying. Now, I guess *Honest Tom* and *Trustworthy Jack* should be able to give some account of themselves and should be a thorn in the side of any new-comer to the field of the Birding Isles (C. H. Smith and Co. files, Cruse to Langley, 9 September 1955).

Cruse loved to big-note himself by writing extravagantly in business correspondence and in advertisements. His production of a pamphlet advertising "Choice Tasmanian Mutton-Birds" may have been the highlight of his business career (see Frontispiece). This little publication with its coloured photograph of a young girl in red shorts carrying a spit of muttonbirds across her back, told of the glamorous life of the early sealers, who were helped by "...dark, shapely girls", and how in the 1950s one could watch "...the coloured birders leave the little birding shacks on the water's edge, go up the rookery, stretch out on the tussock covered ground and thrust their hand arms length down the burrow". Jack Cruse anticipated huge profits from muttonbirds by spreading his message through this pamphlet and undertaking a promotional visit to New Zealand (C. H. Smith and Co. files, Cruse's Report on New Zealand Trip, January 1956).

Cruse also highlighted the need for strict quality controls in processing and marketing muttonbirds (Plate 12). As managing director of the Sea Packing Company, in February 1956 he appointed an experienced local, Eric Henwood, to be responsible for bird quality, and wrote to the factory manager, Keith Williamson, that "the success of this season's operations depends on the full co-operation of all concerned, and from past

experience the writer is confident of the full support of all staff mentioned above" (C. H. Smith and Co. files, Cruse to Williamson, 27 February 1956). For the 1956 financial year £13,323 was spent on purchasing muttonbirds which were later sold for £20,878. The total turnover for the year was £26,349. Muttonbirds constituted the main item, the remainder coming from yacca gum worth £2,738 and fish worth £2,307. By the 1957 season, the parent company (C. H. Smith and Co.) and its subsidiary were buying and selling some 200,000 muttonbirds each season, or around 60 percent of the average annual production of 300,000 birds.

Other buyers during this period included Frank Jackson and Tom Dwyer who operated on Babel and Great Dog Islands respectively. During the 1955 season Langley bought 50,000 birds, Cruse 277,572, Dwyer 60,521 and Jackson 110,150 (AOT AA 612/23/9, Secretary of ABPB to buyers, 19 August 1955). Jackson owned several sheds but soon sold to Cruse while Dwyer only operated two sheds. However while in business they, together with Jack Cruse and Tom Langley, bought sheds from the Aborigines and some non-Aborigines on the two islands. Those muttonbirders thereafter worked for them. According to one account, the Aborigines seemed to prefer working for an outside owner (Carter 1965: 169), but in reality they had little choice.

In 1955 Sea Packing Company bought Sites 2, 6, 8, 10, 11, and 12 (beginning in 1955 each shed site was numbered) on Babel Island, including the house and store at the Gulch, from Frank Jackson for £2,200, while Tom Langley owned five sheds, namely Sites 3, 5, 14, 16 and 18 (Figure 10). The following year, repair and construction work was authorised on ten sites around Babel Island at a total expenditure of £2,092, which included £542 on a new shed at West Beach. This shed was built to government specifications based on the semi-circular "Nissen Hut" architecture. The design was entirely unsatisfactory as no rainwater could be collected from it, and drainage was also a problem (David Rhodes interview). Cruse also owned a site on Little Green Island. Having purchased all these sheds, Sea Packing Company had trouble finding experienced crews to work in them and was forced to advertise and take even people with no experience in muttonbirding.

It was said that muttonbirders played off buyers against each other to force up the prices (C. H. Smith and Co. files, Cruse to Williamson, 26 September 1955). Nevertheless the price paid to the operators on Babel Island was usually from 5/- to over £1 less per 100 birds than that paid to shed owners on Great Dog Island, a consequence of the high freight costs from Babel Island to Lady Barron and pressure put on the muttonbirder to accept lower prices offered to them by the buyers. On Great Dog Island different prices

PACKING AND HANDLING OF MUTTON-BIRDS

PACKING

Mutton-birds are processed by three different methods and packed as follows:

1. SALT-CURED MUTTON-BIRDS are packed in brine in small and large wooden barrels ranging from approximately 100 to 500 birds per barrel.
2. FRESH MUTTON-BIRDS are wrapped in grease-resistant paper, and packed (12) twelve birds per carton. These birds are shock frozen and will keep for months in cool storage.
3. SMOKED MUTTON-BIRDS are cured and brined in a similar manner to the salt-cured birds, and later smoked, and packed in grease-resistant paper, 12 birds per carton, and will keep indefinitely under normal refrigeration conditions.
4. EXPORT PACKS. Salt-cured birds are packed in brine in wooden barrels similar to local market packs. Fresh and smoked mutton-birds are individually wrapped in suitable grease-resistant paper, and packed in cartons specially manufactured for export.

CORRECT METHOD OF OPENING MUTTON-BIRD BARRELS

1. Lay the barrel down, shive (bung) upwards, use hammer (or mallet for preference), tap stave on each side of the shive until shive is loose enough to remove.
2. Then stand the barrel up and remove shive, and run out enough brine to fill a normal bucket, then replace shive.
3. Loosen the second and third hoops by knocking up towards the head of the barrel. When these two hoops are loose, remove top hoop. Then the head of the barrel can be removed quite easily.
4. After taking the head out of the barrel, tighten the second and third hoops back firmly on the barrel, and replace the top hoop.
5. The brine can then be replaced from the bucket without loss. *This is important as the mutton-birds in the barrel should be covered with brine.*

HOW TO MAKE BRINE FOR SALTED MUTTON-BIRDS

Owing to some mishap the brine may be lost from the barrel containing mutton-birds. Fresh brine should be made and replaced. The correct method of making brine is as follows:

The best brine is made from sea water by adding enough coarse salt (such as butchers use). Place a raw potato in the water and stir well while adding the salt until the potato floats to the top of the brine — then you will have the correct strength required.

If it is impossible to get sea water, use fresh water, but boil for 20 minutes and when cool after boiling add salt in the same manner as when mixing with salt water.

With Compliments of
TASMANIAN FRESHFOODS PTY. LTD.
38 ESPLANADE, DEVONPORT, TASMANIA

Plate 12. Pamphlet issued by Jack Cruse on the packing and handling of muttonbirds (Source: C. H. Smith and Co. files).

were also paid to independent shed owners and those tied to Sea Packing Company. Independent shed owners were paid £6 per 100 birds for birds landed at Flinders Island, compared to £5 from "our sheds". Feathers were 9d compared to 6d per pound. Oil was the same at 3/6 per gallon. Freight had to be paid by the shed owner which was quoted at 5/- per 100 birds or £3 per day. The prices for these by-products were similar to those obtained over one hundred years ago. They provided very little income to the muttonbirder, but as they took little effort to collect, any money was worthwhile.

Everything to do with Babel Island was controlled by Sea Packing Company. Apart from owning the sheds, the company provided transport to the island, victualled the shed owners and crews, supplied them with the salt at a price and operated a general store at the Gulch. The only items supplied free were the barrels, but even these were charged to their account at £10 each if surplus barrels were not returned. The Aboriginal shed owners were usually paid advances during the muttonbird season of up to 80 percent of anticipated sales. Items they purchased from the store were debited to their account at the end of the season and so the final payment depended greatly on how much they spent. In the case of one Aboriginal operator in the 1956 season, Sea Packing Company overpaid him by 1/1 and tried unsuccessfully to recover the money. Six other Aborigines received cheques to the value of 4/2, 9/5, £2/4/4, £6/-/5, £13/17/2, and £46/12/9.

The company store sold basic items such as cordials, sweets, vegetables, clothes, medicines, tobacco and cigarettes, jam, tinned meat and cases of apples. Sales were particularly brisk in sweets and especially cordials, as the weather during the muttonbird season in April could get very warm. As a result some of the accounts were large, and on receiving their grocery docket with their final payment for muttonbirds, some of the Aborigines complained about such details as goods not being received. In these cases the company either corrected its mistake or contested the point. In other cases, the large bills made Aborigines ask for "no more dockets please", but for advances in cash for food to be brought from Launceston. Sea Packing Company operated on strict business principles and only gave credit when it was not risking much of a loss. In one atypically generous gesture it allowed one of the Aborigines to keep his final payment, stating in its covering letter:

You will recall that prior to leaving Lady Barron I mentioned that you were slightly overdrawn, but owing to the fact that you have been one of our employees for some months and rendered us good service and assisted with odd jobs on Babel & at Lady Barron this season we have not made a charge for your gang to & from Babel Island per the AK.

Commissioner — by deleting this you have now a small credit of 9/5d
(C. H. Smith and Co. files, Cruse to Mansell, 11 June 1956).

The advances and final income then had to be shared among the crew according to whatever agreement existed between the shed owner and crew. Overall, the Aborigines on Babel Island were worse off after muttonbirding than the non-Aborigines working the islands in Franklin Sound because of the lower price of birds and by-products and the higher prices of goods at the store.

Muttonbirding was not a stable industry as evidenced by the collapse of Sea Packing Company in 1957. Since the beginning of the industry, and up to the present day, only the individual operator has survived to make a living, though very small, from muttonbirding. All large-scale commercial enterprises, including the recently established Trefoil Island Aboriginal Association, have failed as business ventures for reasons explained below.

During the 1950s the muttonbird industry faced two problems. One was the negligence of muttonbirders by not properly preserving muttonbirds, and the other was the demise of the wooden barrel. Jack Cruse insisted that the muttonbirds sold by his company be presented in the best condition to the consumer. Leakage of brine from casks and careless work practices resulted in muttonbirds going off by the time they reached Launceston and New Zealand. This so concerned him that, before allocating sheds to Aborigines, he sought references about them from other persons. The opinions he obtained ranged from "Careful about flies and culls his birds well", to "Fair himself, but the crowd he usually has with him no good. Likely to burn your shed and barrels" (C. H. Smith and Co. files, Cruse to Langley, 2 December 1955). In the end he had no choice about whom he employed because there was a shortage of muttonbirders to work Babel Island. In fact, three of the sheds were vacant during the 1956 season. Whether Cruse had similar opinions about muttonbirders on other islands is not known, but as with the muttonbirders on Babel Island, he had no control over their work practices. Consequently he was constantly rejecting contaminated barrels, as nearly every operator had some go 'off'.

In January 1956 Cruse visited New Zealand as the buyers there were complaining that many of the birds were unfit for human consumption and threatened to discontinue the import of salted muttonbirds. Of the eleven companies interviewed Cruse found that with the exception of the largest buyer, the importers had not the slightest idea of how to handle the birds on arrival (C. H. Smith and Co. files, Cruse's Report on New Zealand

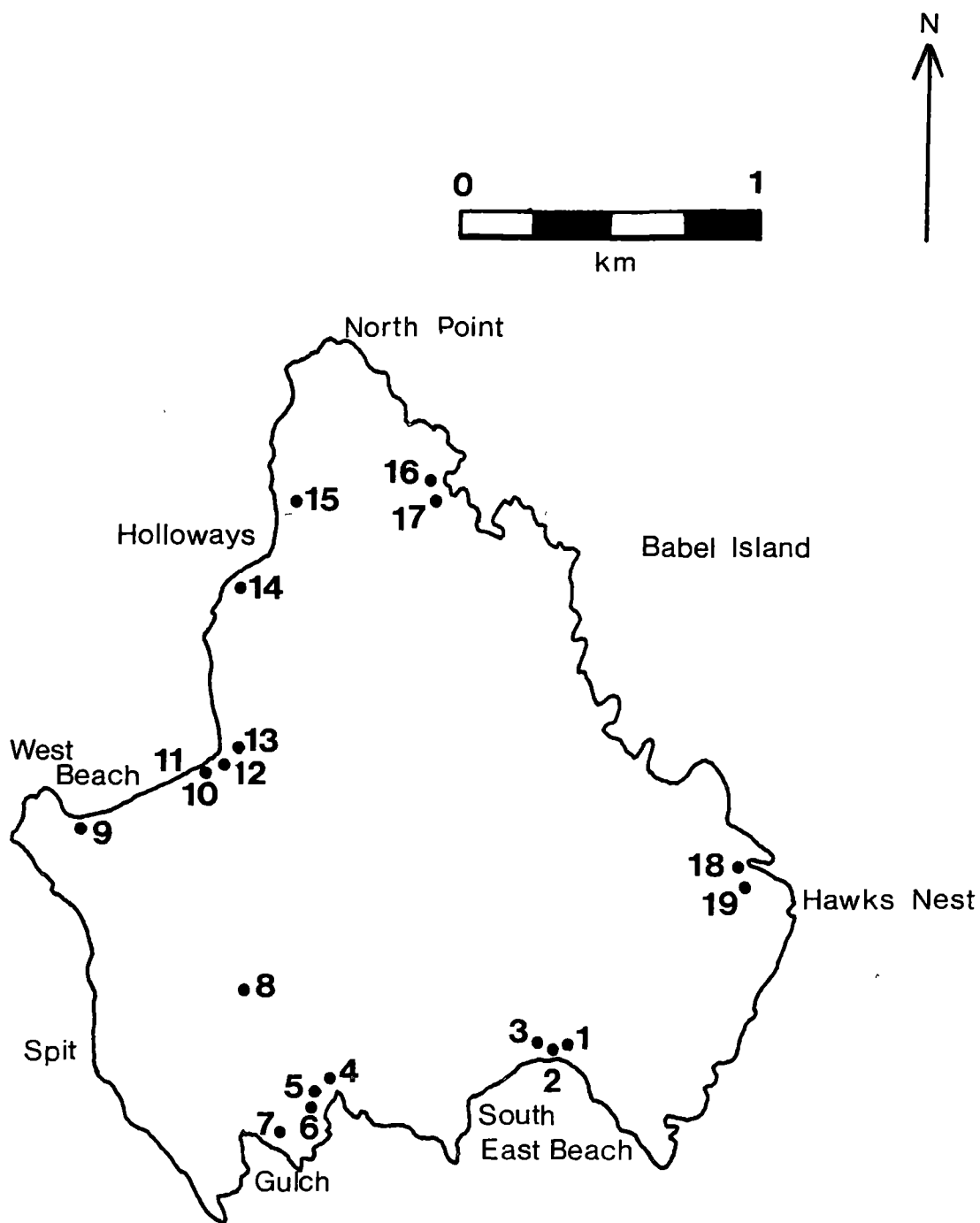


Figure 10. Location of numbered sites on Babel Island.

Trip, January 1956). He had to do some 'fast talking' to induce them to import next season's production, and as the export trade was now about 200,000 muttonbirds, this was a crucial concern. To help minimise the number of contaminated birds, Cruse prepared a pamphlet for muttonbirders giving instructions on how to put casks together and how to test the brine through the "floating potato technique" (Plate 12). The principles of clean handling and proper presentation had to be constantly elucidated to the majority of muttonbirders.

Every cask of salted birds that arrived at the Launceston wharf was inspected by the storeman, whose job was to take out the bung and top up the level of brine till all birds were covered, and also to look out for those unfit for human consumption. For many years this task was performed by Arthur Grant and his father before him. Arthur Grant commenced with C. H. Smith and Co. in 1936 while his father was with them for 33 years; between them they held the job of storemen at the Company for about 60 years. In those days the company trade was sectioned off into stores, and muttonbirds came under the 'grocery store'. Although the work was seasonal, it was hectic when the boats arrived at the wharf. The casks were brought into the yards and inspected. The number of maggots present in the casks determined their ultimate destination. Those with none or very few went to New Zealand while those with more were retained for local sales. According to Arthur Grant the worst jobs he had with C. H. Smith and Co. were handling the yacca gum, which was sticky, and the muttonbirds, which smelt (*Examiner* 23 December 1981):

...if there was a big infestation of maggots they'd go out. But if there was just a few on the top of the brine, and the new brine you put in. They weren't alive they were still dead more or less. They would float to the top and you would just take them off and keep the new brine going until you thought or the foreman thought they were all out...[some birds] would have a very rank smell with them and once that rank smell got into the cask you had no possible hope of getting it out. So what we used to do if we were a little bit timid about them we would get the health inspector over from the City Council open the cask. He would come round and have a look and he would say "Oh yes, they're off, they're no good for anything; you might as well put them on the rubbish tip". But before that, he used to put a red or a pink type of dye on them to stop people from using them (Arthur Grant interview).

The problems of maggot infestation and poor preservation of muttonbirds were perennial. To C. H. Smith and Co. they represented loss of money, not only through the return of contaminated casks to the consignee, but also through the time and cost of inspections.

From the industry's beginning the birds were preserved in wooden barrels which had held other food items before being used for muttonbirds. C. H. Smith and Co. bought their casks for many years from Cadbury, Fry and Pascall, the chocolate manufacturers in Hobart, and then issued them to muttonbirders on loan. In about 1953 Maize Products Ltd. of Melbourne, owners of the Federal Cask Co. which made the casks, closed the enterprise down, and changed over to steel drums. Packing in steel drums was unsatisfactory due to the reaction between the steel and salted birds, and wooden casks became very difficult to procure as the Department of Public Health gradually condemned them. Some deteriorated because muttonbirders took insufficient care of them on the islands, damaging many casks on the rocks as they were rolled down to the boats.

The directors of Island Stores voted to look into the availability of purchasing herring barrels and to investigate the possibility of importing sheaves or staves from Europe to be made into barrels on the islands (C. H. Smith and Co. Island Stores directors' minutes, 13 August 1953). There was also increasing demand from New Zealand for smaller barrels which could be sold more easily. These small barrels held 150 to 230 birds, medium sized barrels 230 to 400 birds, and large barrels 400 to 530 birds. In November 1955 a sample of six Dutch barrels made from firwood and beech, and varying in size from 25 to 100 l, was imported. Also at this time a new plastic product called CRY-O-VAC, in which four birds were packaged in a vacuum pack, was tested. But the idea was deferred, and C. H. Smith and Co. considered that for the 1956 season it needed to import 750 20 gallon casks, and 500 for the next two seasons from Europe. As by now very few casks were being made in Australia, Geoff Smith applied to the Commonwealth Department of Trade and Customs for approval to import casks from Europe and re-export them to New Zealand without paying customs duty (C. H. Smith and Co. files, Geoff Smith to Department of Trade and Customs, 3 August 1955). This novel request stumped the department, and as no decision was quickly forthcoming when the 1956 season came around, the old casks had to be re-worked. Fortunately enough were on hand to satisfy the season. Ultimately no new barrels were imported because soon afterwards the muttonbird industry changed over to waxed cardboard boxes for fresh birds and, later, plastic containers for salted birds.

THE LATTER YEARS

The collapse of Sea Packing Company, the high price of maintaining sheds, and the lack of experienced muttonbirders were some of the factors that caused a continuing decline in muttonbirding on Babel Island. In 1956 115,608 birds were caught on the island compared to 195,886 in 1955, and since the 1958 season, the total catch has never risen above 100,000. The arrangement between C. H. Smith and Co. and Sea Packing Company lasted only one season and on 19 December 1956 the Australian and New Zealand Bank demanded Cruse pay back loans of £9,658 plus interest. Sea Packing Company was voluntarily liquidated in August 1957 and Island Stores stopped buying muttonbirds for the following fifteen years, not getting involved again until the 1970 season. In the intervening period the purchasing was continued by C. H. Smith and Co.

However, just before the bankruptcy of Sea Packing Company, a series of mishaps occurred (for example the company tractor was bogged on the sand spit joining Babel and Flinders Islands and the yacca gum plant broke down). The manager of Island Stores was told that "in view of the financial state of affairs plant should be closed down until the next muttonbird season" (C. H. Smith and Co. files on Sea Packing Company, 23 July 1956). This also meant closing down the yacca gum processing plant at Lady Barron, which was in very poor condition and about to 'expire' anyway. Jack Cruse disappeared from the scene — he was rumoured to have taken a clerk's job on the Melbourne waterfront (Tom Langley interview). A receiver/manager was appointed by the Australian and New Zealand Bank from 13 May 1957 (AOT AA 612/24/11, Surveyor-General for Lands to Secretary of ABPB, 6 June 1957). Tom Langley resigned in 1959 and for five years he and his wife ran the store and post office on Cape Barren Island (Barbara Langley interview). They finally left Flinders Island on 6 January 1969 to settle in Latrobe in northwest Tasmania.

Re-organising after the liquidation of Sea Packing Company, C. H. Smith and Co. approached the following year with vigour. Between 1 November 1956 and 30 June 1957, £24,082 was spent by Island Stores on the muttonbird industry. Advertisements were placed in local newspapers (for example *Mercury* 8 March 1957) for people to run a shed on Babel Island. Two people responded, including an Irishman who said he and his son had just arrived from Ireland, had no knowledge of birding, but had a 4,000 hen poultry shed before the war (C. H. Smith and Co. files, H. D. Lowry to Geoff Smith, 13 March 1957). Neither of the applicants was hired.

For the thirteen years from 1957 Island Stores' fortunes fluctuated widely. A year of loss was followed by one of profit. The company suffered a loss of \$7,338 for the fourteen months up to 31 August 1968, at which time the store at Lady Barron was closed (C. H. Smith and Co. Island Stores directors' minutes, 7 November 1968). Discussions were held on whether to return to the muttonbird business. One year later Island Stores wrote to Sea Packing Company offering to buy its muttonbirding rights for \$500 (C. H. Smith and Co. Island Stores directors' minutes, 23 December 1969). There was talk of financing the rebuilding of muttonbird sheds but the company had learnt from past experience to not over-commit itself. The company was buying muttonbirds taken from the rookeries in northwest Tasmania, and in 1970 20¢ was the asking price for a muttonbird by Stephen Lowry, who, with a large crew of fifteen people, was working in that region. In 1972 the company returned a profit of \$4,091 from buying and selling 73,500 birds, mainly to New Zealand.

With respect to C. H. Smith and Co. a profitable market was maintained in New Zealand, with the majority of a season's purchase sold there. In 1965 the value of the exported birds was \$4,400, consisting of 40,000 salted and 2,664 fresh-frozen muttonbirds. In 1972 67,489 salted muttonbirds were exported, but in 1977 only 8,000. The company finally ceased trading in muttonbirds in 1977 after some 100 years of involvement, when the managing director, Geoff Smith, became seriously ill, and there was no one else with his interest in the birds to carry on the enterprise.

SUMMARY

Formed in 1832 and based in Launceston, C. H. Smith and Co. continues to trade as Australia's oldest marine chandler. The company was involved in island affairs from a very early date. Its first dealings in the muttonbird industry are not known but by the early 1900s it was buying and selling muttonbirds locally and in New Zealand. In the years 1911 to 1925 the annual value of muttonbirds to the company varied from £1,454 in 1911 to £4,905 in 1921.

C. H. Smith and Co. was one of the larger buyers, and as such always expressed concern about the common presence of 'bad' birds in casks sent from the islands. It regarded proper hygiene in processing and packing as essential to the future of the industry. Casks were checked in its Launceston warehouse, and repacked if necessary. Only the best muttonbirds were exported to New Zealand, while the condemned were dyed to prevent human consumption and taken to the Launceston tip for disposal. In order to have more direct control over its purchases, it formed a subsidiary company,

Island Stores. Based at Lady Barron, Island Stores also operated a freezing works, taxi service, bakery, butchery and a general store. It appointed as manager "Honest" Tom Langley, and because of his sharp business sense, the store prospered.

In 1955 Jack Cruse, another buyer, formed Sea Packing Company in partnership with C. H. Smith and Co. and Island Stores. Cruse held half the shares and provided all the capital to buy birds. Sea Packing Company went bankrupt after one season and into voluntary liquidation, with Cruse owing his bank £9,658 plus interest.

Following this short lived enterprise, Island Stores continued to buy birds until it closed in 1968 while C. H. Smith and Co. ran a profitable market in birds, selling mainly in New Zealand. It finally ceased to trade in muttonbirds in 1977 after some 100 years of involvement.

CHAPTER 11

THE MUTTONBIRD INDUSTRY SINCE 1955

It's still very important to the community of the island. If they don't go then they at least try to get down to the island to get their muttonbirds, and go around and see people. So yes it is, it's very important. And not only to the community on Cape Barren Island but to the community in Launceston and Hobart and northwest coast. They always talk about when muttonbirding comes around and who's going, and where are you going, and then everybody tries to get birds for the ones who aren't actually muttonbirding (Karen Brown interview).

In the early 1950s the newly re-formed Muttonbirders' Association realised that the long-term prospects of the industry were in doubt due to decrepit sheds and poor cleaning and packing standards. These concerns were not new but were more critical than in the past as the general public were becoming more aware of hygiene and proper care of food. The marketing of muttonbirds also had to improve. The Animals and Birds Protection Board, too, was concerned about the industry in the Furneaux Group, and began the preliminary stages of re-organising its administration. Until the early 1960s muttonbirding was to be an "increasingly monotonous agenda item" (Eric Guiler, past Chairman ABPB, unpublished). Commercial muttonbirders on islands in western Bass Strait were unaffected, mainly because the Board had very little information on what was occurring in that region. In February 1955 the Animals and Birds Protection Board advised all muttonbirders that licences to take muttonbirds could be refused if sheds did not meet with approval from the Department of Public Health. Furthermore, all new sheds had to be constructed according to the new standard design recently developed by the Board, and leases that allowed buildings on the rookery would not be renewed from year to year but issued annually by the Department of Lands, expiring on 31 December. Lease fees were set at £12, and remained at that price until 1979, when they increased to

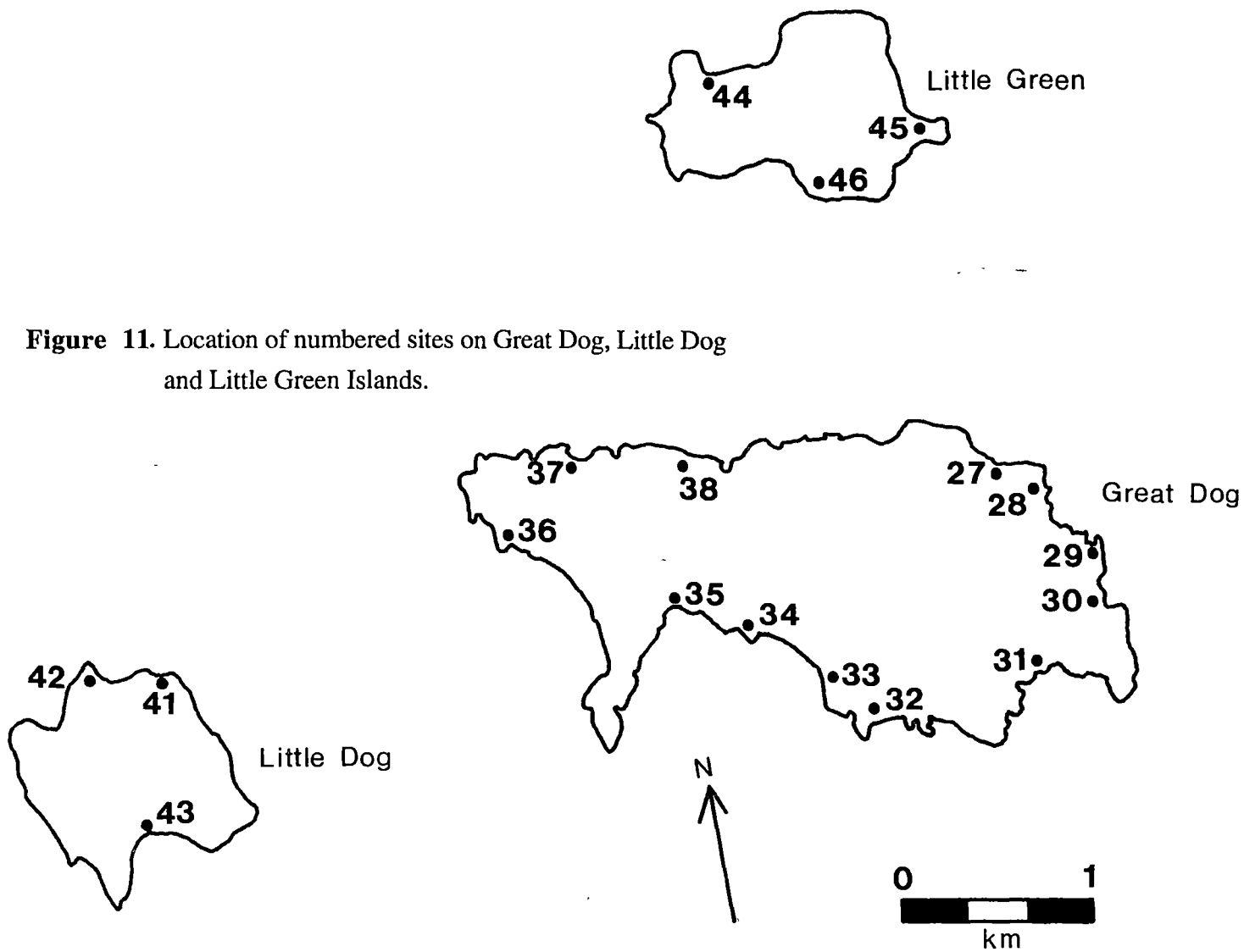
\$50. It was anticipated that these new policies and fees would result in vacancies occurring on the islands, particularly on Babel Island.

MUTTONBIRDING FROM 1955 to 1960

The policies and regulations introduced to bring changes to the muttonbird industry certainly deterred some muttonbirders, particularly when it came to the requirement to provide a plan of any new shed. These conditions were so strictly enforced that on Great Dog Island four of the twelve licences were refused until satisfactory compliance with an order dated 11 June 1954. On Babel Island thirteen of the nineteen sites were refused, which included applications for the construction of six new sheds which were of substandard design. Tom Langley in particular was required to bring all his sites up to standard (AOT AA 612/23/9, Director of Public Health to Secretary for Lands, 1 March 1955). The subsequent inspection of the sheds and of equipment and processes saw a great improvement in hygiene, mainly due to the health inspector spending one full month on the islands, including ten days on Babel Island. The decrease of licensed sheds to six in the 1955 season was permanent. Though the decline affected both Aborigines and non-Aborigines, the Aborigines expressed particular concern that each year fewer of them were holding onto sheds. They were assured that the Animals and Birds Protection Board had their interests in heart, as "it was fully realised the part that the mutton bird season played in their livelyhood [*sic*]" (AOT AA 612/23/9, Constable Hanlon to Secretary of ABPB, 11 May 1955).

In another move to improve the industry an attempt was made to give each shed owner on Great Dog Island a more equitable base. Prior to the 1955 season, the boundaries of each shed owner's rookery were altered to give each shed approximately 20,000 birds each (AOT AA 612/23/9, Constable Hanlon to Secretary of ABPB, 17 January 1955). The final agreement was accepted amicably, and none of the expected differences of opinion eventuated. All said that they would stick to their new boundaries and not poach another person's birds. They were then informed that in future, leases and muttonbird licences would be issued for individual rookeries which would be numbered from one to twelve. The numbering system afterwards was extended to include all the sheds in the Furneaux Group (Figures 10 and 11).

The 1955 season was assessed as only fair by the muttonbirders. The price paid for both salted and fresh muttonbirds from islands in Franklin Sound and Chappell Island was £5 per 100 birds, which was approximately £2/10/- below the highest price obtained in



1954. On Babel Island, the price paid was £4 per 100 birds. The costs of production were calculated to be 2/- per bird for taking them out of a freezer on Flinders Island and loading them onto an aeroplane in small packages, and a further 10d for shipping, freezing, repacking and other associated expenses. This left the buyer a profit of 2d per bird. In Tasmania birds sold for 3/- each, while stuffed and baked birds sold at the Melbourne and Adelaide football grounds for 7/- each (AOT AA 612/23/9, Constable Hanlon to Secretary of ABPB, 11 May 1955).

Despite all the change, the sheds did not meet the standard set by the health inspector after his annual inspection (AOT AA 612/23/9, Health Inspector D'Alton to Director of Public Health, 10 May 1955). Five of the nineteen sheds on Babel Island were condemned, while the remainder, including five new sheds, some of which were more or less built to the new design, required major alterations. The situation was not much better on Great Dog Island where all the sheds were still owned by non-Aborigines. On Little Green and Little Dog Islands five of the six sheds were ordered to be rebuilt. In the following year the Department of Public Health continued its hard-line policy. It objected to the issue of seventeen of the nineteen leases for Babel Island, and all leases on islands in Franklin Sound, until the applicants complied with previous health orders (AOT AA 612/23/10, Director of Public Health to Secretary for Lands, 15 February 1956). It also advised the owner of the solitary shed on Big Green Island off Whitemark that a new shed should be provided. This was to replace one described as "small and rough" (AOT AA 612/23/10, Director of Public Health to Jeff Walker, 8 February 1956). Despite strong enforcement of the new standards, the sheds were still "left in a disgusting state of filth and uncleanness" (AOT AA 612/24/12, Guiler to Secretary of ABPB, 18 March 1958).

In 1955 the muttonbirders organised themselves again into a Muttonbirders' Association. In most cases the Animals and Birds Protection Board listened to its suggestions. One proposal which was accepted was to change the season's start from 23 to 27 March (AOT AA 612/23/9, Eric Cook, Secretary of Muttonbirders' Association to Secretary of ABPB, 10 June 1955; Secretary of ABPB to Cook, 28 June 1955). On the other hand, the Association's objections to the new shed design and the strong stand being taken by the Department of Public Health were not accepted. The complaints, aimed at the Department of Public Health, were based on the types of material demanded for the building sheds as explained below. The Association was somewhat disorganised due to a lack of interest by its members leaving the lobbying to their committee who put forward old designs of sheds. The muttonbirders strongly felt that because of their years of practical experience, their views should be accorded greater credence than those of

government officials who flitted back and forth between Hobart and the islands (AOT AA 612/23/10, Secretary of Muttonbirders' Association to Secretary of ABPB, 16 March 1956). However, the issue was temporarily suspended in 1956 as only twelve of the nineteen sheds on Babel Island and fourteen in Franklin Sound were operated. Unprecedented rains during the summer drowned many eggs and chicks, particularly on the islands in Franklin Sound. The number of licences sold dropped to 71 from 102 in 1955. By 1958 a compromise solution was reached that seemed to have largely satisfied the Association, although the number of sheds continued to drop.

The 1956 season was also notable in that aeroplanes were first used to visit the muttonbird islands. The health inspector, Howard D'Alton, was a passenger in a plane from Launceston piloted by Reg Munro, that made the first ever landing on Babel Island, the plane touching down on West Beach (*Examiner* 7 April 1956). In anticipation of the growing use of aircraft, a landing strip was prepared on Trefoil Island at the western end of Bass Strait.

By the 1957 season only four of the nineteen sites on Babel Island were owned by Aborigines. Of the others, one was owned by R. Furnage Pty. Ltd. of Deloraine, five by Tom Langley, six by Tasmanian Freshfoods Pty. Ltd. but managed by Langley, and three by other non-Aborigines. A number of these sheds were not up to standard. The Public Health Act, 1935 empowered the Department of Public Health to inspect the living quarters or "cook-house" of muttonbirding establishments. This raised the question of what was an acceptable living standard for muttonbirders. The guide-lines adopted were those provided for workers in hop-fields and small-fruit orchards under the Public Health Act, 1903 (AOT AA 612/24/11, Director of Public Health to Secretary of ABPB, 29 October 1957). They prescribed a minimum air space of 300 cubic feet for each adult and half that for children under fourteen years of age. Other obligatory provisions included a minimum ceiling height of 7 feet 6 inches, a toilet, a supply of fresh water, and a fly-proof food safe. These regulations were set out in a circular sent each season to every shed owner, together with a list of specific work to be undertaken on individual sheds.

The Aborigines had now almost totally lost ownership of the muttonbird industry, and instead they had to sub-let the sheds from Langley for an alleged £50 per season (AOT AA 612/24/11, Inspector McIntyre to Secretary of ABPB, 16 March 1957). The conditions under which they lived were dismal and their food bills from the Babel Island store were very high. They had to sell to Langley who paid them £5 per 100 birds in 1957. That season eleven of the eighteen sheds were operated on Babel Island.

Chappell and Big Green Islands were not worked for the second year in succession, Little Green Island only had one shed, and Little Dog Island was reduced to two sheds. Birds were in short supply and shops on mainland Tasmania quickly sold out their stocks. In 1957 the Aborigines did not own any sheds on Great Dog Island either, although one Aborigine worked as shed boss for an absentee owner and others as shed hands and catchers. In 1958 two Aborigines acted as shed bosses for non-Aboriginal owners.

In July 1957 a number of islands were proclaimed muttonbird 'hunting grounds' in order to conserve the rookeries on them for muttonbirding (*Tasmanian Government Gazette* 17 July 1957: 1457). Some of the rookeries had been previously reserved while others were unallocated crown land. They included all the commercial and several popular amateur (non-commercial) rookeries in eastern and western Bass Strait. Amateur muttonbirders were permitted to take muttonbirds for home consumption only. Throughout the 1950s constant difficulty was experienced in policing the regulations, particularly those pertaining to pets, sub-letting and, perhaps especially, the problem of people being on a muttonbird island during the closed season. It was difficult to prosecute any person for a breach of this regulation, as it was usually only in this period that people had the time to upgrade their sheds.

The matter of pets came up again when the wife of one shed owner on Great Dog Island was denied permission to take a cat over to keep the mice down (AOT AA 612/23/9, Secretary of ABPB to Constable Bailey, 7 June 1955). In 1957 two shed owners each deliberately took a pet cat over to the island. Strychnine and "Ratsak" were issued to reduce the numbers of mice, which were said to be in plague proportions. By 1957 cats were feral on several of the muttonbird islands despite regulations which were supposed to prevent their introduction. Thirty four years later in 1991, 189 cats were trapped on Great Dog Island in five months, leaving an estimated 10 to 20 still to be caught as based on the scarcity of droppings found (Skira, unpublished).

The regulations of the Animals and Birds Protection Act, 1928, Public Health Act, 1935, and the Crown Lands Act, 1935 were now governing a declining industry. In 1958 the solitary shed on Little Green Island was condemned and Babel Island was reduced to nine working sheds. The Department of Public Health required work on ten sheds on Babel Island, four sheds on Great Dog Island and one shed on Little Dog Island. In this instance work was to be permitted before the season opened. There was said to be a growing reluctance on the part of Aborigines to work on Babel Island because unemployment relief was worth more than income from muttonbirding (AOT AA

612/24/12, Report of Guiler and Bryden to ABPB, 18 March 1958). This was incorrect, as on investigation it was found that only about 5 men out of a total population of 81 (including 32 children) were receiving relief. The truth may have been that nearly all the sheds were either owned or managed by Tom Langley, and the Aborigines did not wish to work for him. Langley had difficulty getting crews for Babel Island and was forced to employ migrant Greeks and Italians for the 1958 season (AOT AA 612/24/12, Report of Guiler and Bryden to ABPB, 18 March 1958). They were unsuitably prepared for muttonbirding, and did not return the following season.

Within its limited powers the Board did as much as possible to prevent the exploitation of muttonbirders in the industry. However, there was little it could do, and Tom Langley did private deals with operatives without informing the Department of Lands. The 1950s were an eventful period for the Aborigines. The loss of ownership of muttonbird sheds was combined with several poor muttonbird seasons, general unemployment, and the lapse of the yacca gum industry. Families abandoned the Furneaux Group for mainland Tasmania. For example, the number of men on Cape Barren Island decreased from 60 in 1951 to 41 in 1958 (Appendix 1). The economics of muttonbirding were against them remaining on the islands as they had no means of subsistence for the rest of the year. Without massive welfare injections, the Aborigines had to move away, which they did.

The Government Muttonbird Sheds

Since the 1920s the government, through the Department of Public Health's inspectors, the Animals and Birds Protection Board and Serventy's work, had gained insight into the muttonbird industry. It proposed methods on how to improve it without "drastic interference with the half-caste birders" (AOT AA 612/22/4, ABPB Internal Report on the muttonbird industry, 4 June 1946). One of them was to upgrade the hygienic processing of muttonbirds through the construction of central processing sheds instead of individual sheds. The minimum cost was estimated to be £850 for each living quarters and processing shed, or £17,000 for 20 such sheds. The proposal was considered most suitable for the Aborigines on Babel Island, and no timeframe was placed upon its implementation. The committee investigating the proposal recommended that the Chairman of the Animals and Birds Protection Board, in his capacity as Minister for Agriculture, take the matter up with the government regarding further investigation and finance. By January 1947 preliminary plans were drawn, but the Board met its first obstacle when the Crown Solicitor wrote that, in his opinion, the Board had no competence in the consequent management and maintenance of a muttonbird processing shed, and suggested that it consult with the Commerce Division of the Department of

Agriculture (AOT AA 612/22/4, Crown Solicitor to Secretary of Attorney-General Department, 24 January 1947). This legal opinion deterred the Animals and Birds Protection Board from taking further action until 1954.

In late 1954 the chief architect of the Public Works Department was verbally requested by the Chairman of the Animals and Birds Protection Board to draw up plans for minimum standard sheds for Babel Island (AOT AA 612/23/8, Chief Architect of Public Works Department to Secretary of ABPB, 15 December 1954). The specifications were approved by the Departments of Public Health and Lands with minor alterations. The plans were then forwarded to two builders in the north of the state and one in Hobart to prepare quotes for the construction of one, two and three sheds respectively. The quote per shed that was accepted was £771 for one shed, £741 each for two sheds and £725 each for three sheds, all excluding sea freight to Babel Island. The other quote received was £866 each. The builder whose quote was accepted was to be advised further.

In the meantime the specifications were modified after consultation with the Muttonbirders' Association. By May 1955 the design for the new standard shed was established. Because of the large number of sheds that were condemned after the 1955 season, the Animals and Birds Protection Board advised muttonbirders that it was intending to build two or three sheds on Babel Island which it would re-sell to approved buyers through a deposit and annual payment scheme. It considered that the Islanders (it probably had non-Aborigines in mind) could afford the repayments as they had already demonstrated a capacity and a willingness to pay £300 for transfer rights and improvements worth less than £100.

In July 1955 the Animals and Birds Protection Board again advertised in the daily newspapers for tenders, for the erection of three timber sheds on Babel Island (*Examiner* 9 July 1955). The value of the tenders varied from £695 to £1,090 per shed. The Muttonbirders' Association had further amendments, including changing the outside wall material from weather-boards to "Duroasbestos". This was not accepted by the Board which argued that asbestos cracked, "permitting flies and other undesirable pests" to enter the building (AOT AA 612/23/9, Secretary of ABPB to Director of Public Health, 28 September 1955). The Animals and Birds Protection Board argued that muttonbirders had had it too good for too long, and that if they did not accept responsibility for proper hygiene the industry would decline (AOT AA 612/23/9, Department of Public Health to Muttonbirders' Association on Muttonbird Industry 1955, n. d.). More discussions were held on the type of material permitted to be used in sheds, with compromises on both sides (AOT AA 612/23/10, Internal Memorandum to Minister for Health, 14

December 1955; Minutes of muttonbird meeting at Lady Barron, 18 April 1956). In particular the Muttonbirders' Association wanted more time for its members to improve their sheds, pointing out that hardship would occur if they had to build new ones according to the proposed design. There were some adverse criticisms on aspects of the design of one new shed on Babel Island, but they were unfounded. These criticisms revolved around the position of fly-proof doors, the position of the scalding room, and the provision of doors to ensure that the processing shed was fly-proof. By the end of 1956 a compromise shed had been designed which specified any durable material for the external covering and two different internal designs (AOT AA 612/23/10, Secretary of ABPB to Nield, 7 December 1956).

As the Animals and Birds Protection Board depended on a direct government grant to erect the sheds it had to solicit money from the Department of Agriculture. Initially the department was unco-operative, stating that the Board should be able to find enough funds to finance at least one shed. It even provided them with the means in which they could funds "why one of their cars should not be sold as they have three cars and only two men using them" (AOT AA 612/23/10, Secretary for Agriculture to Chairman of ABPB, 6 September 1955). No money was made available in the 1955-56 financial year, but assurances were given that funds would be made available the following year. In 1956-57 £1,600 for this purpose was placed in the Estimates under the nebulous heading "miscellaneous" (AOT AA 612/23/10, Acting Minister for Agriculture to Chairman of ABPB, 14 June 1956), with the condition that it had to be paid back to Treasury.

Although by 1957 the Animals and Birds Protection Board was having difficulty in obtaining a suitable builder, the contract was finally given to a Hobart builder who erected two sheds at a cost of £1,580, with shipping and labour expenses of £70/10/-. With paid local labour, three Nissen type sheds were erected on Babel Island in March 1958. It was the intention of the Board to sub-let them for £35 per annum for the first year and up to £50 thereafter. There were few takers, principally because of the continuing decline of muttonbirding. The Board finally chose two Aborigines from Cape Barren Island as the first lessees. At Site 6, Darcy Maynard had a new processing shed, while at Site 16, Eric Maynard had a cookhouse as well as a new processing shed. Only Site 6 was worked as Eric Maynard was unable to get a crew due to the late construction of his sheds and the men he had lined up having found work in other sheds.

Some additional work on each shed remained to be done, but according to the health inspector, the sheds were of the highest standard and the best in the "entire Straits" (AOT

AA 612/24/12, Health Inspector D'Alton to Secretary of ABPB, 6 March 1958). However, several weeks later an inspection by the Animals and Birds Protection Board revealed that the concrete in the living quarters had been mixed with too much soil and seawater, and too little cement. Moreover, the building was not fly-proofed, largely because the corrugated iron against the framing timber left large gaps. The building was also unlined and poorly ventilated. Because of the semi-circular design, the gutters were on the ground. Consequently the tanks were some distance downhill. The Board was advised to withhold payment of £100 to the builder until all the faults were remedied.

Having provided the sheds, the Animals and Birds Protection Board did not take their maintenance into consideration. The upkeep of the sheds did require some regular time and money, and the Aborigines were still too poor to do it. One muttonbird who had worked on Babel Island from the heyday of the 1930s through to the declining 1950s saw it as a waste of money:

The government planned building three sheds out there and I advised them not to because it would be a waste of money...Anyway D'Alton and I had an argument over it and he said Babel will boom again and I said, well it's gone, I can tell you that now. It was just absolute waste of money that the government put in. But you can't tell them anything even how much experience you have got. They just won't listen. They will come out with something and if they think that is right that is what they will do (David Rhodes interview).

Several years later Site 16 was in such dilapidated condition that it was not passed by the health inspector until certain improvements had been made (DEP Licence 4300, Director of Public Health to Secretary for Lands, 29 March 1966). The shed at Site 6 was condemned in 1972. However, regardless of their short life-span due to the rusting of the iron roof cladding, they did provide several Aborigines with a living which would not otherwise have been possible, and in this way the sheds could be deemed to have served a useful purpose.

Despite the attention of the Animals and Birds Protection Board and the Departments of Public Health and Lands, the muttonbird industry continued to operate much as it had always done, haphazardly. Interest in Babel Island, once the most prolific of the muttonbird producing islands, had declined, primarily because of the shortage of experienced crews, expense in transport and maintaining sheds and the changes in island shipping. The island was isolated, and for some years no trading vessels had been

available for freighting to and from it. Interested muttonbirders had, therefore, to rely on fishing boats, which levied high charges. Both Great Dog and Trefoil Islands were beginning to attract more Aborigines. The industry did not seem to have learned anything from the health inspectors who had tried very hard to inculcate hygienic processes. Muttonbirders still tried to do everything as cheaply as possible. In 1959 the Department of Public Health had to caution one of the buyers to use proper and clean wooden containers to transport fresh birds (AOT AA 612/24/13, Director of Public Health to Dwyer, 12 March 1959). It recommended metal containers, but the suggestion was not taken up.

The total number of muttonbirds caught on Babel Island had fallen from 196,000 in 1955 to 74,000 in 1959. The corresponding drop in the number of sheds was from 15 to 9. The Aborigines for whom the Board had built new sheds to entice them to stay in the industry were leaving the islands. Through the 1950s the population of Cape Barren Island had decreased by one-third. The changing circumstances eventually led the Board to decide in 1959 to review its commitment to the industry in view of changing circumstances. The fortunes of Island Stores were fluctuating considerably and it claimed that the export of muttonbirds to New Zealand had fallen dramatically, from 200,000 to 60,000, in this period. People in the industry were also expressing their doubts for its future. The birds now were in no danger of over-exploitation.

MUTTONBIRDING FROM 1960 to 1970

Although the agitation of the early 1950s had passed, the Muttonbirders' Association was still active. Discussions were now held over less contentious matters such as burning off rookeries and protecting sheds from catching fire during the burn-offs. The Association represented the interests of shed owners on Great Dog Island who, in 1965, were all non-Aborigines. Tom Langley was still around, and brought upon himself the wrath of the bureaucrats because he rented sheds and placed an operator in them without permission of the Departments of Lands and Public Health. He was an absentee landlord of one shed, had gained control of another two, was applying for another, and was negotiating for the purchase of yet another two (DEP Crown Land 4/14/1, ABPB Meeting, 22 June 1965). Of the other owners, some were reaching retirement age. Transfer of ownership to Aborigines was just a matter of time as several of them were shed bosses for non-Aborigines. By 1969 two Aborigines from Cape Barren Island, Edevine Mansell and Phillip Thomas, had purchased sheds on Great Dog Island.

Meanwhile, most of the sheds on Babel Island had deteriorated too far to be renovated. Tom Langley was hoping to spark some interest in the island but did not have the money to renovate the sheds, nor the crews to staff them (DEP Licence 4295, Langley to Director of Public Health, 31 January 1963). He had approached the government on a number of occasions for financial help but to no avail. There were only three sheds still in reasonable condition — at South East Beach, the Gulch and West Beach. Throughout the 1960s the lessees of each shed were either experienced muttonbirders nearing the end of their working life, or newcomers with little experience. These newcomers held their sheds for only one or two years then sold to other inexperienced people.

Prices throughout the 1960s increased very slowly because of low inflation. The disparity between the cost of producing a muttonbird and the price paid to the muttonbirder widened as the wholesale price had not changed much since the mid-1950s. In 1964 the wholesale price for salted birds was £7 to £7/15/- per 100 birds. Fresh birds sold for £7/10 per 100 birds. In 1968 prices were much the same as in previous years, the main change being that fresh birds were now dearer than salted, by \$2 to \$3 (£1-£1/10) per 100 birds. That year 177 people were employed in the industry with 62 of them on Trefoil Island. By 1971 the total was 117. From then on statistics record only the number of catchers employed. And as early as 1965, more birds were being taken off Trefoil Island than any other island in Bass Strait. There the Aborigines were assured of a set wage without the responsibility of operating sheds, as explained in Chapter 12.

MUTTONBIRDING FROM 1970 TO PRESENT

Department of Parks, Wildlife and Heritage

In 1971 the Animals and Birds Protection Board was replaced by the National Parks and Wildlife Service following the introduction of the National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1970. This Act was a thorough and complete revamp of the now outdated Animals and Birds Protection Act, 1928. The principal themes of the new Act were to strengthen the reservation and protection of Tasmania's natural features, including fauna. To achieve these aims, professional staff were recruited to establish the conservation of wildlife in Tasmania on a scientific basis. The muttonbird regulations remained similar to those promulgated under the 1928 Act. Night-birding, which was frequently cited as occurring on all the islands, was still prohibited, although some petitioned for its re-introduction (PWH W2/5/7 Volume 2, Luck, Vincent and O'Reilly to Director of National Parks and Wildlife Service, 18 May 1976). The regulations defined "night" as the period between one hour after sunset and one hour before the following sunrise. The National Parks and

Wildlife Service continued to collaborate with Serventy on his Fisher Island studies. After his retirement in 1968, it also continued the banding of approximately 1,000 muttonbirds each season on Great Dog, Little Dog and Little Green Islands to monitor the commercial catch. As we have seen, the banding was last performed in 1976 when it was replaced by the direct counting of each occupied and unoccupied burrow along set transects (Skira and Wapstra 1980: 233), a system that Serventy had tried but found too time consuming.

The administrative changes resulting from the formation of the new conservation body did not affect the muttonbird industry. In the 1971 season only one Aborigine, Edevine Mansell, fully owned a shed lease on Great Dog Island, while Thomas was still paying his off. Mansell purchased his shed for \$1,600 from George Ross, who had bought it from David Rhodes in 1962 for £700. Tom Langley held two sheds and well-known Launceston aviator, Reg Munro, owned one. The remaining seven belonged to people who first held them in the 1950s, although some had not been used for several years. The island was also said to be not as productive as it had been approximately 20 years previously as a result of over-harvesting (PWH W2/5/7 Volume 1, Wildlife Officer Harmon to Secretary of ABPB, 5 February 1971). Heavy rains in December 1970 washed out many burrows on the islands, making for a poor season in 1971 (*Examiner* 11 May 1971). Only 32 commercial licences were issued in the Furneaux Group, and the price obtained was \$3 per 12 birds.

Two thirds of the total catch of 350,000 in 1971 came from Trefoil Island. Since 1969 the catch on the western Bass Strait islands exceeded that of the Furneaux Group. The population of Cape Barren Island continued to decline, and the ever increasing cost of transport and upgrading sheds resulted in sheds on the other islands becoming derelict. The cost of repairs was not worth it when wages could be earned by working for someone else. Apart from Great Dog Island, there were only two sheds operating on Babel Island, and none on Little Dog and Chappell Islands.

In contrast, access to the islands in the Hunter Group was facilitated by the presence of airstrips, and the cost of processing was reduced by transporting whole birds in the feather from Walker, Three Hummock and Hunter Islands to Smithton for processing. This negated the need to build expensive processing sheds. A second important factor was that some muttonbirders in the Hunter Group were not on a wage, but were paid a set price per bird. This gave them an incentive to work hard. For example, in 1985 three muttonbirders on Walker Island were paid 30c per bird by Frank O' Reilly of Boat Harbour in northwest Tasmania, who also leased Three Hummock and Steep Islands.

The men worked from 7am to approximately 3pm every day of the week in all weather. Catching some 800 birds daily, which was the maximum that could be flown off the island and processed in Smithton each day, the birds were bagged and carted 5 km to the airstrip. Their season's total was 41,000 birds. The increasing interest in the western islands saw applications to catch muttonbird on islands that had never been worked for commercial purposes. The Doughboys, two small islands rising very steeply from the sea off Cape Grim and of difficult access, were the favourite target. Applicants came up with such bizarre schemes as a cable car arrangement and the use of a hanging rope ladder with access from the deck of a boat (DEP PF 6006, Real Estate Section to Director of Lands, Internal Memo, 15 November 1977). Both methods were refused on safety grounds and lack of easy access for inspectors.

During the 1970s the muttonbird industry remained steady, with strong local and overseas demand. In 1973 there were 50 people on the islands of the Furneaux Group, and about 100 on the western Bass Strait islands, of which 80 were on Trefoil Island. However, the only individual shed owners were in the Furneaux Group. Trefoil Island was privately owned and the other islands in northwestern Tasmania were under the control of one or two operators. Although all could be termed monopolies, the exploitative of the muttonbirders was absent. The muttonbirders were either on a wage or a set price per bird. There were also three small operators, one of whom caught 600 birds on Three Hummock Island and processed and sold them from his home in Smithton, while the second caught 130 birds on King Island and sold them through his employer, the local butcher at Currie. The third operated a shed on a small muttonbird rookery covering only several hectares at the southern end of Hunter Island. He took 2,800 muttonbirds. Three years later, in 1976, a small operation was based on the rookery near the homestead on the western side of Hunter Island. About 280 birds were processed each day resulting in a total catch of 5,000 birds. The regulations permitted such activity as long as a commercial licence worth \$20 was purchased. In the ensuing years, all these small operations ceased, finally terminating in 1989 with the abandonment of the rookery at the southern end of Hunter Island.

All the overseas export was to New Zealand where the large Maori community was partial to the bird. As few Maoris had access to the southern islands where the sooty shearwater bred in thousands, or to the other islands around New Zealand where other species of petrels bred and were taken for food, there was a strong market for the Tasmanian muttonbird. By 1980 one third of all muttonbirds caught in Tasmania were exported (Table 13). Local wholesale prices increased gradually from \$3.20 per 12 birds in 1974 to \$5.20 per 12 birds in 1975. The retail price was up to 80c per bird.

In the Furneaux Group, seven sheds were worked on Great Dog Island. In 1975 Edevine Mansell was the sole Aboriginal owner on the island in his own right, while Phillip Thomas was still in the process of paying off Site 30 that he acquired in 1969. In 1976 Mansell acquired a second shed. That year there were 27 catchers, with the 3 sheds owned by Aborigines having 8, 6 and 2 catchers respectively, the majority of whom were family members. Employing immediate family was a tradition among both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal muttonbirders, but much more so among the Aborigines. The non-Aboriginal shed operators had only two catchers each in 1976, some of whom were Aborigines.

Table 13. Number of Muttonbirds Caught Commercially and Exported to New Zealand, 1980-1992.

Year	Number of birds caught	Number of birds exported	Percentage of total take
1980	335,744	140,604	41.89
1981	369,085	183,025	49.59
1982	359,305	186,120	51.80
1983	412,645	229,159	55.53
1984	367,219	163,590	44.55
1985	324,579	116,985	36.04
1986	249,014	123,865	49.74
1987	235,890	79,500	33.70
1988	310,336	120,880	38.95
1989	217,638	57,660	26.50
1990	202,824	68,284	33.70
1991	160,997	20,166	12.50
1992	137,059	20,040	14.60

(Source: PWH W2/5/7)

But history repeated itself again, and a transfer of ownership of sheds on Great Dog Island to Aborigines began to occur in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In 1981 of the eight sheds still operating five were owned by Aborigines. This remained the situation

up to the 1993 season, after which one of the three sheds was bought by an Aborigine from Hobart who had been muttonbirding for many years. In the main, the Aborigines did not hold long onto their sheds. Transfers were common and often passed onto immediate family. The price paid for a site varied between \$5,000 and \$10,000, as some rookeries were better and larger than others. Sub-letting was a major problem and the government wrote numerous letters to gain information on who actually operated on a particular site. There was little that could be done to prevent the practice.

In 1972 John Nield, who had been a shed owner on Great Dog Island for many years, applied to harvest Big Green Island which he had purchased (PWH W2/5/7 Volume 2, Nield to Director of National Parks and Wildlife Service, 18 September 1972). The island had been exploited intermittently for many years with an average seasonal catch of about 5,000 birds. A shed was built at the southern end of Big Green Island, and for six years until 1978 John Nield personally caught and processed birds for local sale, with only occasional assistance from another person. The operation ceased when Nield retired and the Service moved to buy the island for conservation of the Cape Barren goose, which existed on the island in considerable numbers.

The Demise of Babel Island

Muttonbirding on Babel Island in this period was a shadow of former days. Due to the lack of interest in the island, it had been delineated into four areas, Sites 1, 1A, 2 and 2A (DEP PF 5346 No. 1, Director of Public Health to Secretary of ABPB, 28 August 1969). In July 1970 Kenneth Nicholls, who was living on the west coast of Tasmania, bought Site 2. He never worked the rookery although he kept on paying an annual rent of \$300 until January 1973. Upon relinquishing the lease tenders giving the successful lessees exclusive use of rookeries in each area were called. It seems likely that the price tendered included an "inbuilt competitive bird-taking payment consideration over and above the mere use of the areas" (DEP A. 4.3.79, Mutton Bird Industry, Valuer-General to Director-General of Lands, 22 November 1978). This phrase probably meant that tenders were higher than what they would have been for the land alone. Site 2 sold for \$457 and Site 1A for \$178. Site 2 was not worked until Jack Bumford obtained the lease from Lois Farley in February 1975. Meanwhile Site 2A had been transferred to Cyril and Maree Green who already held Site 1A.

In the 1975 season Jack Bumford had two of the three sheds on the island still suitable for muttonbirding. The others were derelict or had disappeared. Bumford saw the problem that African boxthorn was causing and was prepared to remove them from his

lease. He also wished to graze sheep to keep down the green vine or ice plant (*Tetragonia implexicoma*), and to put in an airstrip at Holloway Point. His plans for stock and for an airstrip were not approved by the Service. In 1976 he employed 38 people at his 2 sheds, 8 of whom were catchers. According to estimates, approximately 4,000 birds a day were being processed (PWH W2/5/7 Volume 2, Wildlife Ranger Littlejohn to Senior Ranger Randall, 15 April 1976). With a vehicle, apparently a World War II German personnel carrier, Bumford established tracks about 70 m apart to facilitate access to birds on the western slopes of Babel Island. Later these tracks were incriminated in the spread of African boxthorn to areas where they had hitherto been absent. In 1977 he only operated one shed, the other being worked by Cyril Green. Bumford last worked Babel Island in 1978, illegally, because he did not pay rent for the site or purchase a muttonbird operator's licence. His lease was cancelled.

The next person to try their luck was Lois Farley, who based her operations at West Beach for three years. Farley was given permission to operate by Jack Bumford, though he had no authority to give the lease to her. The Director-General of Lands recommended that the vacant site should be put up for tender, and considered that preference should be given to tenders received from Aborigines (DEP A.4.3.79, Mutton Bird Industry, Director-General of Lands to Minister for Housing and Construction, 30 November 1978). Farley and her crew illegally occupied the West Beach site for the 1981 season, although there were official attempts to remove them. Despite being close relatives, friction also developed between Farley and the Greens, who operated at the Gulch. After a compromise was negotiated, she worked the site until 1984, after which the West Beach site became derelict. In 1984 the Greens obtained the whole island for a total fee of \$358 per annum. Today only the Gulch site is worked, and that irregularly, depending on whether buyers can be found for the salted birds. Of the other islands, Chappell Island was worked for the last time in 1975. The following year it was offered to the Flinders Island Aboriginal Community Association for three years, but the offer was not taken up. The reason given was a lack of markets for the birds (PWH W2/5/7 Volume 2, Ranger Booth to Chief Wildlife Officer, 22 May 1979).

Aboriginal Requests for Muttonbirding Rights

The high costs associated with commercial muttonbirding were increasingly felt within the Aboriginal community. In the past the basis of the industry was people who had their own shed and operated independently of each other. Back in 1909 Bishop Mercer had told the Aborigines that the only way ahead was "to secure unity of action and combination in financial and commercial transactions" (*Examiner* 15 March 1909). For

non-Aborigines the muttonbirders' associations provided collective bargaining power though the actual operations were still left to each individual.

With its recognition in the late 1960s of the existence of Aborigines in Tasmania, the Commonwealth government, in addition to giving aid to Aborigines on Cape Barren Island, also assisted Aborigines by extending them loans to build new muttonbird sheds. The government recognised the tradition and real economic value that muttonbirding had played in the past. The loans were an attempt to give Aborigines economic independence so as to move them of the welfare system. In 1970 Devony Brown of Cape Barren Island applied for a loan from the Office of Aboriginal Affairs to build a new processing shed on Little Dog Island. The loan was granted but never taken up and interest in working the island did not arise again. The island was last worked in 1971 when the only shed was condemned.

In 1975 the Aboriginal community on Flinders Island initiated a proposal for a fish processing factory at Lady Barron. Funded by the Commonwealth government the factory opened in October 1977, processing locally caught fish and muttonbirds. A grant of \$81,000 was provided in 1978 to continue the project (Sculthorpe 1978: 6), but in 1981 the factory closed, due in part to its inability to compete with another local fish processor who also bought and sold muttonbirds.

Following a campaign to secure recognition for land rights claims, the Tasmanian Labor government in 1978 agreed to inquire into Aboriginal needs (TPP 1978. Number 94). Three study groups were set up to investigate the feasibility of an Aboriginal Land Trust, government support for increased Aboriginal participation in the muttonbird industry, and the social development of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community. The Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre used the recommendation of this inquiry that Aboriginal land rights be granted, to present a claim for land rights over the muttonbird islands. The Centre asked the Attorney-General to freeze all licences on Babel Island for one year (PWH W2/5/7 Volume 2, Attorney-General to Minister for National Parks and Wildlife, 16 February 1979), to enable it to seek a ten year lease and funding from the Commonwealth government. The centre was concerned that, if the licence was given to someone else, the opportunity might thereafter be lost. The government replied that, as licences were issued annually, the holder had no exclusive legal right to annual renewal.

The Aboriginal Centre also made inquiries about Little Dog Island. The Lands Department wrote back that it would investigate their request. Nothing eventuated because the political question of the granting of land rights had to be resolved first.

Towards the end of 1979 the Commonwealth government, through the Aboriginal Loans Commission, initiated moves to purchase Trefoil Island for the Tasmanian Aboriginal community. Babel Island had also been the subject of Commonwealth interest in 1978, but in 1980 an inquiry did not proceed past the initial investigative stage (PWH W2/5/7 Volume 3, Allen and Associates to Director of National Parks and Wildlife Service, 24 April 1980).

In 1980 Trefoil Island was bought by the Commonwealth government in trust for the Aborigines of Tasmania, who formed the Trefoil Island Aboriginal Corporation on 5 June 1980 with a registered office in Launceston. A president, treasurer and a committee of nine were elected at the second meeting of the Corporation on 15 July 1980 (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission files, Hobart). The Corporation appointed a manager to oversee the muttonbirding operations and to run the island as before (see next chapter). However, through the 1980s the number of birds caught on Trefoil Island declined to less than 150,000 annually, some of which were exported to New Zealand. This did not reflect a declining muttonbird population but decreasing demand and ever increasing costs.

SUMMARY

By the mid-1950s many muttonbird sheds were up to 30 years old, in a poor state of repair, and as a result, did not meet minimum health standards. This led the Animals and Birds Protection Board to introduce changes to the muttonbird industry by forcing muttonbirders to renovate or build new sheds, and by instituting an annual lease rather than a season's occupational lease. This gave more security of tenure over sites. The struggle by muttonbird buyers for control of sheds also saw Aborigines sell their sheds till most of them were in the hands of absentee owners. Consequently many fell into disrepair.

Beginning in 1955 the Animals and Birds Protection Board spent three energetic years getting new sheds built on Babel Island to sell to Aborigines so that they had a chance of becoming shed owners without having to outlay a large amount of money. It was also an attempt to produce a better product through upgrading hygiene standards. The Board, together with many muttonbirders, was concerned that the future of the industry was in jeopardy unless health and presentation standards were lifted. The Board ignored the evidence of structural change — that the number of muttonbirders and of birds caught were continually dwindling, and that Aborigines were permanently leaving Cape Barren Island to seek jobs on the Tasmanian mainland. The opportunity of

securing long-term employment was more important to the Aborigines than remaining poor and adhering to the tradition of muttonbirding. Two sheds were erected in 1958 and sold to Aborigines from Cape Barren Island on long-term repayments. Unfortunately the Board made no provision for their maintenance, and in the 1960s an ultimatum was given that, unless they were refurbished by the operators, they would be condemned.

Through the 1960s the industry declined to the extent that in 1970 there were only three sheds on Babel Island in a presentable state, and by 1984, only one. The construction of new sheds required more money than most people had. Because of this, Aboriginal assertion of land rights and self determination in the 1970s included requests from state and federal governments for assistance in providing sheds. As a step in this direction the Commonwealth government in 1980 bought Trefoil Island in northwest Tasmania for Aborigines who formed the Trefoil Island Aboriginal Corporation to administer the island. The state government also attempted to help individual Aborigines and Aboriginal organisations to secure sheds but without the offer of money.

Since the 1960s, the government departments that administer the regulations covering muttonbirding have increasingly left the industry to its own devices. The widespread use of freezers, which enables operators to market fresh muttonbirds instead of salted, has given the consumer the ability to be the final judge of the product rather than the health inspector.

CHAPTER 12

MUTTONBIRDING IN NORTHWEST TASMANIA

To me it was a good working holiday and also people you hadn't seen for years, you'd get together and I think that's a great thing. If I went to Trefoil this year I wouldn't see those people no more until I went there again. So since I've left Trefoil I haven't seen any of them, only the people who live in this area. So there's a lot involved in it really. Different stories, tales and that, they carry on about (Doug Lowery interview).

The islands in northwest Tasmania where commercial muttonbirding occurs are all in the Hunter Group. In contrast to the commercial rookeries in the Furneaux Group which all occur on relatively small islands, the rookeries in the northwest are on islands that vary greatly in size (Table 7). It also appears that several of the rookeries being worked today were very small or non-existent until the late nineteenth century. According to the late Maurice Sampson, a longtime resident of Smithton and a former muttonbirder, in 1898 "a colony of them nested on the First Bluff at Robbins Island and about three years later extended their rookeries to the Second Bluff and also on the northern end of Walkers Island. Before this a small colony nested on Rocky Petrel" (*Advocate* 26 March 1977). An even earlier account mentions that 'fresh rookeries' were to be found every year on Walker Island (Atkinson 1890: 157).

The Hunter Group has had a long history of occupation by lessees for grazing and hunting for wallaby. In the census on 3 April 1881, there were eight people on Trefoil Island, eight on Robbins Island, and five on Hunter Island. In terms of muttonbirding Trefoil Island has a tradition reaching almost as far back as that in the Furneaux Group. It is the second largest muttonbird rookery in Tasmania after Babel Island and the island was visited by Aborigines for muttonbirds before European contact. Following

settlement of the far northwest by grazing interests in the 1830s, it was worked on a small scale until commercial interests took over in the mid-twentieth century. Since the 1950s it has become a preferred alternative to the muttonbirding islands of the Furneaux Group for Aborigines, who today own the island.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, the rookeries on Trefoil and Steep Islands were the only ones being worked regularly. Of the other islands, muttonbirds were taken occasionally from West Hunter (now called Hunter), Three Hummock and Stack Islands (*Circular Head Chronicle* 11 May 1955). Until recently, muttonbirding in northwest Tasmania was purely a commercial proposition by individual non-Aborigines, who viewed it as an adjunct to their other commercial enterprises, usually farming and fishing. They employed small crews and because of this, the number of muttonbirds caught was always small. There was never the tradition and total economic dependence as existed for Aborigines in the Furneaux Group. But once Aborigines began moving to mainland Tasmania, the operators on these islands used the Aborigines' experience of muttonbirding with great success. At the present day both Aborigines and non-Aborigines work these rookeries.

TREFOIL ISLAND

Apart from Robinson's journal, historical information on muttonbirding in northwest Tasmania is scant, and what is available usually refers to Trefoil Island. Robinson recorded that Aborigines used to swim to the island for muttonbirds (Robinson 1966: 183). James Backhouse visited Trefoil Island in 1832 (Backhouse 10 November 1832) and found honeysuckle bushes *Banksia integrifolia*, scattered upon the higher parts. He wrote that before the island was stocked some parts of it were wet, and in 1832 were still rushy. There were also extensive patches of bracken fern *Pteridium esculentum*, many of them mixed with a "virgate species of *Acacia* which appeared to be scarcely more than perennial". Backhouse noticed that the stems of plants a mere two years of age were all dead. Muttonbirds were then found in three sites on Trefoil Island. Today the *Acacia* and honeysuckle have virtually disappeared, and the main vegetation is silver tussock with a few small patches of bracken fern. The only trees on the island are six specimens of the introduced conifer *Cupressus macrocarpa* and several specimens of African boxthorn. Currently Trefoil Island is one huge muttonbird rookery.

The history of the muttonbird industry on Trefoil Island is inextricably associated with the Van Diemen's Land Company (VDL Co.). Formed in London by people interested in investing in Tasmania, the company's charter was officially ratified by the Great Seal

on 10 November 1825 (Meston n. d. [c. 1959]: 18). The then Governor of Tasmania, Lieutenant-Governor Arthur, was anxious to attract settlers by offering free grants of land in the new colony. The company was granted a huge block of 142,000 ha in northwest Tasmania including the present muttonbird islands of Trefoil, Robbins and Walker Islands. At its formation, the charter permitted the company to be not only involved in pastoral activities, but in other primary industries as well, in order to secure as much profit as it could from its investments. For instance, it was allowed to lend money to any person engaged in whaling or sealing "upon or in the neighbourhood of the Coasts of Van Diemen's Land and its Dependencies aforesaid, for the purpose of carrying on such fisheries" (HRA III, VI: 604).

A farming settlement called Woolnorth was established almost in sight of Trefoil Island. In December 1833 the establishment held 62 people, including 25 assigned servants and 20 children (ML VDL Co. Tas. Papers 340). By 1837 the number of people had dropped to 36. The conditions under which these people survived must have been severe, for in August 1837 the assigned servants refused to eat the bad provisions which included "salt-pork, muttonbirds and all manner of rubbish" (CSO 5/142/3432, 259). The muttonbirds were most likely salted birds from Trefoil Island, and probably fly-blown, a recurrent problem with salted cask muttonbirds.

Sheep were pastured on Trefoil Island very early in its history and also on other islands such as West Hunter Island. Some were lost to raids by sealers while others drowned, the losses on both accounts being occasionally large. The monthly stock report of 31 December 1833 by the Superintendent, Samuel Reeves, reports the loss of 37 merino ewes from West Hunter Island. Blame was placed upon a sealing gang of six men (ML VDL Co. Tas. Papers 340). Shepherds were assigned to look after the flocks on Trefoil and West Hunter Islands and it seems they spent much of their time on the islands. In September 1834 the shepherd Joseph Hunt spent "twenty-five days attending to the ram flock on Trefoil Island and the rest of the time employed in removing the Imp. [improved] flock to the West Hunters" (ML VDL Co. Tas. Papers 340). The sheep were reported in those years to be in good condition and doing extremely well, although they could not always be inspected due to windy weather. The Woolnorth establishment ran about 4,000 sheep in the period from 1834 to 1837, of which there may have been several hundred on Trefoil Island (ML VDL Co. Tas. Papers 341). Trefoil Island must have posed a problem because of its small size and the difficulty of landing, which was at the mercy of the weather.

With such a large area of land to administer, the islands must have been a nuisance to the company because of their small size, general scrubby nature, and the requirement to have a boat to reach them. In face of these difficulties, it is no surprise that a special report attached to the 29th Annual Report (1854) mentioned that Trefoil Island, because of its limited area (91 ha), was of little value, while Robbins Island was let as it was of no importance to the company, and Walker Island was declared barren. In 1857 the VDL Co. rented out Trefoil Island to J. Grant for £10 a year. Grant still had the lease in 1863 (VDL Annual Reports 1857-63). He probably ran sheep and gained extra income from muttonbirds.

Early shipping movements gleaned from local newspapers refer constantly to Trefoil Island (Table 14). One of the first known contemporary records is the arrival of the cutter *Rainbow* from Woolnorth via the Petrel Islands with fourteen casks of muttonbirds (*Examiner* 3 June 1865), although muttonbirds were gathered probably from the region for sale much earlier. It is more than likely that the birds mentioned in the voyages of the *Waterwitch* and the *Ariel* were obtained from Trefoil Island (Table 14), whilst the *Fanny's* 1878 trip represents the first shipment from Trefoil Island that year (*Examiner* 19 April 1878). The shipping records from the *Examiner* indicate that the majority of the northwest muttonbird trade came from Trefoil Island, with up to 30 casks of muttonbirds plus by-products of fat, oil and feathers being shipped out on a single voyage, whilst birds were also being caught on Stack and Robbins Islands and Steep Head (now Steep Island).

Trefoil Island was also worked for muttonbirds by Robert Kay and William J. C. (Chas) Reid (*Circular Head Chronicle* 11 May 1955). Robert Kay was one of five brothers who were prominent in the pioneering and development of Circular Head (Buckby 1984: 63). Another of the brothers, Albert Boyes Kay, leased Trefoil Island from 1 January 1874 until his drowning in October 1895. Prior to his death he ran about 400 sheep on the island and caught muttonbirds when in season. Muttonbirding appears to have been mainly a family concern as the number of birds taken off Trefoil Island by the Kays was always small.

As part of a general mining boom in Tasmania in the 1880s, the VDL Co. formed the VDL Minerals Co. Ltd. to search for minerals on its land in an attempt to get some return from marginal grazing land. Captain James Rowe reported to the Directors of the VDL Minerals Co. Ltd. that he discovered nothing on Walker and Robbins Islands and did not visit Trefoil Island as he did not have a boat.

After the death of Albert Boyes Kay, Trefoil Island passed through many hands (Buckby 1984: 76). W. J. Reid rented the island from December 1896 until 1902, when the VDL Co. demanded a four fold increase in rent to £100 per year, which Reid refused to pay. In 1905 65,000 birds were taken from Trefoil Island. Several people held the lease in the ensuing years (in 1911 the VDL Co. advertised "Trefoil Island for let by VDL Co. 255 acres. Good grazing and excellent muttonbird rookery"). In the early 1900s the VDL Co. began to sell much of its non-productive land which, as at 22 February 1912, encompassed 342,674 acres (138,678 ha). In 1918 Gerald Breheny, hotel proprietor at Stanley, and William Rainbird, a local farmer, bought the island off the VDL Co. for £900 (Buckby 1984: 78). Trefoil Island continued to carry stock during their occupancy and they supplemented their income from muttonbirding. In 1919 about 20 people, mostly Aborigines, were employed in muttonbirding. They lived in temporary accommodation as there were no permanent houses on Trefoil Island (Buckby 1984: 79). Breheny and Rainbird held the island to 1926; it was their best year, with the sale of 80,000 birds:

In that year we sent 20,000 salted birds to New Zealand and the price in those days was one pound per hundred birds. We sold oil, fat and feathers too; feathers brought two shillings and sixpence per pound. Birds were cheap. Casks for the birds were also cheap and easy to obtain. Labour costs too, were low. I think we paid our men about twenty pound for the season (Rainbird 1984: 80).

In 1926 Holyman Bros. bought Trefoil Island from Breheny and Rainbird for £1,000. The owners had decided to sell because of the difficulties of getting stock and equipment on and off the island. The Holymans harvested the island for many years and faced the dangers brought about by weather that every other owner had endured. They held the island for 24 years until 1950, when they sold it to Will (Bill) Nichols, master mariner, and John Buckby, grazier, for £800. Nichols and his wife had been prominent in shipping and trading in muttonbirds in the Furneaux Group for many years beforehand, and applied their expertise to Trefoil Island.

Before 1951 (approximately) there was only one shed situated in the middle of the island. In 1951 Nichols operated two sheds which produced some 38,000 salted birds that season. The following season the sheds were managed by John Buckby who employed twelve Aborigines under the supervision of C. A. Mansell at the "top shed", and seven Aborigines at the shed on the East Beach (AOT AA 612 /23/6, Health Inspector Hickman to Director of Public Health, 2 April 1952). By 1953 there were three sheds on Trefoil

Table 14. Details of Muttonbird Cargoes in Northwest Tasmania.

Boat	Comments	Source (Launceston <i>Examiner</i> unless otherwise stated)
<i>Rainbow</i>	From Woolnorth via the Petrel Islands: 14 casks muttonbirds	3 June 1865
<i>Water Witch</i>	From Circular Head for Penguin Creek: 10 casks muttonbirds	20 April 1867
<i>Ariel</i>	Arrived Circular Head from Cape Grim: 21 casks muttonbirds	20 April 1877
<i>Water Lily</i>	From Circular Head for Trefoil Island with casks for muttonbirds	7 March 1878
<i>Fanny</i>	From Circular Head for Trefoil Island: took on board 26 casks muttonbirds	19 April 1878
<i>Brothers</i>	Arrived Circular Head from Steep-head Island and Woolnorth with butter and muttonbirds	4 April 1879
<i>Fanny</i>	From Circular Head for Trefoil with casks	4 April 1879
<i>Fanny</i>	Arrived Circular Head from Trefoil Island 25 casks muttonbirds	15 April 1879
<i>Fanny</i>	Arrived Circular Head from Trefoil 30 casks muttonbirds, fat, oil and feathers	2 May 1879
<i>Water Lily</i>	From Circular Head for Montagu with stores and from thence muttonbirding	13 April 1881
<i>Water Lily</i>	Arrived Circular Head from Stack Island with 3 casks muttonbirds	22 April 1881
<i>Kate</i>	Arrived Circular Head from Trefoil and Robbins Islands with muttonbirds	23 May 1881
<i>Ariel</i>	From West and East Montagu, 20 casks muttonbirds	<i>Circular Head Chronicle</i> 29 April 1908

Island for the muttonbirders and their families. According to Buckby (1984: 101), Bill Nichols employed about 40 Aborigines each year, though only after the third shed was built. In the first few years of their ownership, the muttonbirders got half the birds and found their own provisions. In their best year, 1954, 82,100 muttonbirds were caught, for which the Nichols got £3 per 100 birds. But only eleven catchers were licensed: the discrepancy between the number of muttonbirders in 1954 and in previous years was due to the fact that 21 muttonbirders did not buy licences. Mrs Nichols took full

responsibility for the resultant charges and was fined £104/1/- (AOT AA 612/23/8, Secretary of ABPB to Serventy, 13 July 1954).

In 1955 C. H. Smith and Co. bought birds from Trefoil Island, while those from Hunter and Walker Islands were sold direct to retail shops. The birds were generally processed to high standards, although an inspection in February 1956 highlighted some deficiencies (AOT AA 612/23/10, Director of Public Health to W. Nichols, 9 February 1956). The principal problems were insufficient water storage tanks and a need to fly-proof the processing rooms.

In April 1958 the Luck family purchased Trefoil Island for £4,000. Until now all the birds had been salted, but the Lucks built a freezing plant. They also cut an airstrip (previously the only method of transport was by boat). The strip was built where muttonbirds nested, and to prevent birds from tearing it up, wire netting was placed across the runway (Buckby 1984: 103). Building the airstrip certainly did not assist with the conservation of the species, as tens of thousands of muttonbirds were forced from their homes.

Bob Luck and his son Jim greatly increased production of muttonbirds from the island. By 1971 their crew, numbering some 53 people, was catching and processing almost 200,000 birds annually. The birds were all flown to local and overseas markets, principally New Zealand. That their enterprise was so well-managed was attributed by Serventy to "white-owned and rigidly white-supervised, with Cape Barren Islanders as employees only" (PWH W2/5/7 Volume 1, Serventy to Secretary of ABPB, 23 September 1971). Serventy's rather patronising comment sits oddly with his comment that muttonbirding in the Furneaux Group was marked by an old, warm picturesque way of life, an enjoyable variant of earning income rather than the strict business deal it had become on Trefoil Island. The Luck's system was appreciated by the Aborigines who fondly remember those days:

When he, old Bob Luck, died, it was a great loss to the Aboriginal community because he did look after us. Not in so many words when you say, he more or less looked after my family ever since I was nearly born, and Mrs Nichols. He'd even go to court for our Aboriginal men and women that were fronting court and probably get jail sentences out of them, whatever they done, for what offence they committed. And he'd front and he'd say well look, I'm taking them away for six to eight or ten weeks, I'll reassure you they can't break no laws where they are going,

and you know, give him an outline, the judge...And that was the best part about it. Kind of give you a feeling that you were wanted, he didn't care just for the work, he cared for us as people (Pam Stonehouse interview).

During the 1970s Trefoil Island was the largest producer of muttonbirds in Tasmania with annual catches near or over 175,000.

In 1977 Jim Luck experimented with a new technique to take the feathers off the birds. Instead of scalding in hot water, the birds were dipped into hot wax, which according to him eliminated the need for skilled people (*Advocate* 28 March 1977). Four sheds were set to use the wax method while one shed was to continue with the old method. But the technique was a complete failure:

They put them through the machinery that waxed the birds, set a film of wax all over them. And it sort of made the bird's meat go dark and it tasted awful. We used to walk up to the shed and have a look in the factory while they were doing it. With a bit of string we used to bob the string up and down inside the wax in the holders like, and ended up each time you done it got thicker and thicker, make your own candles out of it. But we wouldn't eat them birds. That fell through too, no one would buy them in the end, no. You can only do it in the one way, that's all reverted back to that way now, the original way (Kim Stonehouse interview).

With the push for self-help for Aborigines in the 1970s, the Commonwealth government purchased the island for the Aborigines of Tasmania in 1980. The Aborigines formed the Trefoil Island Aboriginal Corporation, and in December 1980 they advertised for a manager for the 1981 season to run the factory and do general administrative duties at a salary of \$1,000 per month (*Mercury* 6 December 1980). Doug Lowery was appointed, and shed bosses were recruited to work the four sheds. The prices fetched for each bird were \$1.20 for fresh plucked, \$1.30 for skinned, and \$1.37 for salted. At the end of the season, the Corporation returned a profit, which turned out to be the only time in the ten years it operated that a profit was realised. Because of the demand for fresh birds, the Corporation in 1982 was hoping to put up the price of birds and sell the majority in Tasmania, exporting only the minimum needed to retain the New Zealand market (PWH W2/5/7 Volume 3, Wildlife Technical Officer Towney to Chief Wildlife Officer, 11 May 1981). Unfortunately for the Corporation, prices remained the same. The 1981 season

was also noteworthy for the sighting and dispatch of two tiger snakes on an island which had never had any previously. Muttonbirders who had worked the island for many years surmised that they had been deliberately introduced to frighten the Aborigines.

In the ensuing years the Corporation was racked by debts, while attempting to improve processing and living standards on the island. House mice were abundant through the sheds and living quarters, although some muttonbirders said they became accustomed to them running over their face while asleep. In 1986 the Commonwealth granted \$46,000 to upgrade buildings. Much of the money was poorly used as few improvements seem to have been made (Marge Mansell interview). Requests by the Corporation for more money were refused and in 1990 it was declared bankrupt. In 1991 the Commonwealth advertised Trefoil Island for tender, the successful applicant being Doug Lowery who had wide experience in the muttonbird industry, having worked in the Furneaux Group, and on Trefoil and Steep Islands as shed boss. In his first year, 1993, he intended to sub-let all four sheds (Doug Lowery, personal communication). This may result in the economic autonomy that Aborigines seek, with the muttonbirders working for themselves, rather than for the Corporation. Selling the birds directly to the buyer instead of passing them through the Corporation as in the past cuts out the 'middle-man', thereby putting more money into the hands of the individual muttonbirder.

WALKER AND ROBBINS ISLANDS

Like many of the other western Bass Strait islands, Walker and Robbins Islands have had a long history of non-Aboriginal occupation (Buckby 1988). The islands were officially granted to the VDL Co. but had little potential except for grazing and were soon leased out. In 1916 the VDL Co. sold them to Holyman Bros. for £6,185 (Buckby 1988: 62). The islands have remained in the Holyman family ever since.

Walker Island has a much larger muttonbird rookery than Robbins Island and has been worked commercially at irregular intervals for many years. People involved include the Reid family, who worked both islands in the years 1900-1916; William Buckby, who caught about 3,000 muttonbirds each season from 1920 to the early 1930s; and John Newall, from the 1930s to the mid-1940s. Newall leased the muttonbirding rights from William Holyman and Sons (AOT AA 612/22/3, Sergeant Kearney to Secretary of ABPB, 22 December 1948). His annual catch was around 20,000, with 21,225 birds coming off the island in 1935. In 1945 Walter Bentley and his syndicate obtained the rights, and held them for about ten years (Buckby 1988:159). They gained the rights when Holyman's put the island up for tender:

And then people named Newall, they leased it, they had it for a long time. Salted birds, and then Holyman put it up for lease. He wanted Newalls to do the job by boat. Too many people going across and crossing onto Robbins Island, chasing the cattle away from the water holes and all that sort of thing. So he asked Newalls. He gave them two or three years grace, they didn't build their boats so then he put it up, accepted our tender which was only about a third of some of the tenders because he wanted a man like Frank that he knew would look after the island. He had great faith in Frank Burnell (Walter Bentley interview).

Prior to muttonbirding on Walker Island, Walter Bentley and Frank Burnell had been catching muttonbirds from the Petrel Islands:

The Depression didn't affect us much. No, not really, you could still sell a few muttonbirds. Yes. I can remember going out around the country on Good Friday. We didn't get home for Thursday, we got home on Good Friday with a load of fish and eight hundred muttonbirds, and we sold them out around the country with a horse and cart. And lots of places there was no money but you'd get a pound of butter, or a little butter sponge or carrots, parsnips, something like that, just something. But it usually worked out. At that time they were about fourpence each the muttonbird (Walter Bentley interview).

When the syndicate of four was formed, Frank Burnell was the main operator:

It was a big job, had work. My friend and I we used to go to the island every second day. Very rarely missed, sometimes very bad weather, but we aimed to catch a thousand birds in two days. And we would have to clean those and sell them every two days. We'd have two men on the island plus a cook (Walter Bentley interview).

In 1951 Frank Burnell employed three people who caught 22,000 birds which were stored in a freezer aboard a boat and sold fresh from the Smithton wharf and in the surrounding district. Several years later the birds were held in a shed prior to daily shipment (DEP PF Property File 8931, A/Director of Public Health to Secretary for Lands, 31 May 1957). The syndicate broke up when Bentley became very sick, and in 1959 the Edward's family took over. They built an additional bunk-house near Burnell's camp and a cleaning shed at the northern end of the island. They also installed a large

freezer on the island to store muttonbirds before transporting them to Smithton by boat every two to three days. Bill Edwards as a teenager had helped William Buckby to catch birds. He held the lease until 1969. With a crew of about 10 people he processed from 1,500 to 1,800 birds a day (Bill Edwards interview). Edwards gave up the lease for reasons that included lack of secure tenure, too many snakes and unpredictable weather:

We had two years on Hummock. We was birding there for Burnell for two seasons. South Paddock and Ranger. We only put in a couple of days on the Ranger, too many snakes there. That's why we left Walkers. We got eight out of the holes the last year we was there. Oh that and we had to keep a boat there all the time, you see we had to keep a big boat there. The weather used to change on us. If we had the island for perhaps ten years it would have been a different thing, put a bit of a slip in there (Bill Edwards interview).

Bill Vincent from Smithton then took on the muttonbirding until 1986. He paid the Hammond family, descendants of Holyman, several thousand dollars each year for the muttonbirding rights. He then hired a small crew who were paid for each bird they caught. A qualified pilot, Vincent flew the birds off each afternoon for processing in Smithton. In 1987 the Hammonds decided to work the island themselves to supply their new enterprise of canning muttonbirds (Buckby 1988: 163). Their grandfather (Keith Holyman) had once owned the canning factory at Lady Barron during the 1940s. At their processing factory in Smithton they produced a can that held one and a half muttonbirds, and juice to make a net weight of 450 g. The product was aimed at the restaurant market (*Sunday Tasmanian* 15 February 1987; *Advocate* 19 March 1987), but did not sell well, partly due to its high price, and partly due to a certain blandness of taste. However, the main factor was probably the reluctance of people to consume a canned product, particularly as the Hammonds were hoping to establish an export market in the United States of America, a country where muttonbirds had no tradition, even as a gourmet food. A trial shipment of 50 cans was seized by customs authorities in Hawaii, as the proper export permits were lacking, and the label described the contents as a "wild bird product", which aroused the suspicions of the customs officers (John Hammond personal communication). After this expensive experience the Hammonds leased out the rights for the muttonbirds to Frank O'Reilly who continues to work the island. In the last ten years the annual catch has been between 20,000 and 30,000 muttonbirds, and occasionally near 40,000.

Robbins Island, by contrast, was worked by the lessees and by friends who visited by horse, cart or motor vehicle "provided the channel or crossing is known to those intending to make the trip" (AOT AA 612/22/3, Sergeant Kearney to Secretary of ABPB, 22 December 1948). The small rookery situated on the northeast side of the island provided only several thousands of birds each season, although there was an estimate made in 1942 of 10,000 muttonbirds. In the early 1980s the Hammonds allowed amateur muttonbirders to take birds on permit (*Advocate* 21 March 1981), and in recent years the island has been used to top up the catch on Walker Island, producing some 3,000 muttonbirds annually (Appendix 2). As with Walker Island the birds are flown off for processing in Smithton, or at some other nearby place on the Tasmanian mainland.

THREE HUMMOCK ISLAND

To about the 1940s, it appears that most of the muttonbirding on this island was undertaken by the lessees who used the muttonbirds for home consumption. The annual catch in the 1940s was estimated to be around 2,000 to 3,000 birds. In 1951 a shed on the South Paddock rookery on the southern side of the island was "hurriedly erected". It was completed just before the 1952 season commenced. Operated by Edward Williams of Devonport, with two assistants, the shed was small and unhygienic, and was condemned by the health inspector. Williams told the inspector that he had no idea of what was actually required when he built the shed, but intended to build new ones at the Mermaid and Ranger rookeries. He took no heed of instructions or advice regarding building standards, and in 1955 had two sheds on the South Paddock rookery, both being "totally unsuitable and in no way is comparable with the worst on the Furneaux Group" (AOT AA 612/23/9, Health Inspector D'Alton to Director of Public Health, 11 May 1955). Edwards was told that he would not be allowed to work the island again until he built a new shed. He did not work the island again.

In 1972 Frank O'Reilly began commercial operations at the Mermaid and South Paddock rookeries. Previously P. Newall had worked South Paddock for several years, where he built living quarters. The birds were processed in Smithton. O'Reilly's operation involved flying off birds daily for processing at his home at Boat Harbour. His team consisted of up to eight catchers living on the island, and alternating between the two rookeries. In 1978 it was alleged that they were illegally night-birding and living in a camp of "humpy" standard which was "disgracefully littered" (PWH W2/5/7 Volume 2, Chief Wildlife Officer Eberhard to Director of National Parks and Wildlife Service, 3 July 1978). There was discussion in the Service of closing down O'Reilly's operations, but after asking him to clean up his camps and introducing rules for his commercial

operations, muttonbirding was permitted to continue. However, further restrictions were placed on O'Reilly in 1979, when the South Paddock rookery was closed to allow the habitat to recover from erosion due to overgrazing by cattle. This did not overly affect him because there were sufficient birds at the Mermaid to satisfy his markets. The rookery was re-opened the following year. In January 1982 both the commercial rookeries were ravaged by a wildfire that devastated large areas of the island. The fire also destroyed three quarters of the Ranger rookery in the northwest of the island which had been worked commercially at intermittent intervals up to the early 1970s, but was now open to amateur muttonbirders only. Muttonbirding was permitted on the two commercial rookeries but with quotas, while the Ranger rookery was closed for two years. By 1984 the vegetation had sufficiently recovered on all the rookeries to permit commercial and amateur muttonbirding.

STEEP (STEEP HEAD) ISLAND

A tussock covered island situated 2 km to the west of Hunter Island, and covering some 40 ha, it rises, as its name suggests, steeply from the sea. Access is by boat only, and as the island is surrounded by a platform exposed between tides, landings can be dangerous in rough weather.

The history of muttonbirding on Steep Island is sporadic. It was described by Robinson as the largest muttonbird rookery in the region (Robinson 1966: 183), though he never visited Trefoil Island, and so had no real point of comparison. According to Maurice Sampson, it was said to have been worked in 1898 when the main operators from Robbins Island and from Irishtown were collecting gear and stores, and engaging gangs of men for the six weeks work on Trefoil and Steep Islands (*Advocate* 26 March 1977). The birds were salted in brine. Salted birds sold then for 14/- per 100 birds and the ruling wage for birders was 15/- to 25/- per week, as well as 'keep' (*Circular Head Chronicle* 11 May 1955). The family most involved in the early muttonbirding industry was the Reids, particularly James Reid. James Reid was born on Robbins Island in 1878 where his father, James H. Reid, raised sheep and cattle (*Advocate* 15 January 1965). Together with his father and brothers, he leased muttonbird rookeries on Steep Island. On his death in 1965 he was remembered as an expert shearer, boatman and muttonbirder (*Advocate* 15 January 1965).

At the turn of the century, only Trefoil and Steep Islands were worked regularly (*Circular Head Chronicle* 11 May 1955). The Reid family were paying rent to the government of £1 per annum for Steep Island in 1896 and 1904 (AOT TRE 21/7/285, 21/11/32). In

1905 30,000 birds were said to have been taken off, but shortly thereafter operations ceased, and in 1950 it was claimed that the island had not been birded for some 40 years (AOT AA 612/22/4A, Sampson to Chairman of ABPB, 15 February 1950). However, it is known that it was worked commercially in 1933 (*Advocate* 24 March 1976), and at some time muttonbirding sheds were erected just above the shingle beach on the south eastern side (DEP PF Property File 6427, Sampson to Secretary for Lands, 20 December 1956). It was also worked intermittently through the 1940s with an estimated 35,000 birds taken off in 1942. However, the difficulty of landing and its remote position probably led to it being worked only at irregular intervals.

In August 1954 Edward Williams made application to the Animals and Birds Protection Board to erect a shed on the island. He was, at the time, working the South Paddock Rookery on Three Hummock Island. The application was refused on the ground that the smaller rookeries should be left for the non-commercial muttonbirder. Further applications were made in the 1950s but they were cancelled when the applicants did not comply with the stated conditions which were to erect two sheds or one very large shed, and to construct an airstrip (there was no flat land to construct an airstrip). In the 1960s the policy of the Board changed — it was now to keep the island free of sheds (PWH files, ABPB Meeting, Hobart, 22 June 1965). It changed again in 1973 when tenders were called for a commercial muttonbird operation. The only tender received was from Frank O'Reilly, for \$50. It was accepted, and in 1976 commercial operations began once again on Steep Island, O'Reilly working the island with a crew of eight to ten people, all Aborigines. The tradition of a family unit that once was prevalent in the Furneaux Group exists on Steep Island today. The shed hands are either immediate family or close friends of the shed boss. The birds are salted due to the difficulty and expense of providing regular shipping. In recent years the annual catch has declined from over 30,000 when O'Reilly first began to around 20,000 birds. The reason for this is not known, but has been put down to a shortage of birds breeding on the island (Doug Lowery, personal communication).

HUNTER ISLAND

Hunter Island has had a long history of pre-historical human occupation (Bowdler 1980: 13). We have seen in Chapter 2 how much use was made of the island by Aborigines for game, and Robinson mentions how the Aborigines "used to go this island, swimming from one island to another" (Robinson 1966: 177). Non-Aboriginal occupation began in the second half of the nineteenth century (Buckby, n. d. [c. 1990]: 43-52). In 1851 a non-Aboriginal man and an Aboriginal woman were employed at salting down

muttonbirds and hunting kangaroo at Shepherd's Bay on the eastern side of Hunter Island (Diary in possession of Patrick Maguire, Smithton). This bay is some 5 km from the present large rookery at the northern end of the island. In 1879 the island was rented out for £25 per annum (AOT TRE 21/3/204), and has now been continually leased for over 100 years. The Ford family and then the Busby family had the lease for almost 60 years, before it was transferred to Patrick Maguire in 1959. In 1986 it was transferred to the present lessee, Rick Lawrence.

Muttonbird rookeries are well distributed around the island, with large ones on the northern and western coasts, and a smaller one at the southern end. The Ford family only obtained eight to nine casks each season from rookeries on the west coast. These were for their own use, and for share farmers working for the family in the Smithton region:

We transported the casks on a sledge from the rookery about four miles away to the edge of the water. The bullocks would stand up to their knees in the water and they would roll them down till they started floating. The casks would float with the weight of the birds in them, and they would tie them behind the row boat and row them out to the ketch. There wouldn't be any brine in them until they got to Stanley. They would be dry salted. Dad had a lot of share farmers milking down here and they always wanted a cask of muttonbirds for the winter and he let them all have a cask that way. He would charge them a pound a hundred for them (Connie McDonald interview).

Commercial muttonbirding on Hunter Island is of relatively recent origin. A new shed was built in 1956 at the southern end of the island. Operated by J. Newall, who had been working the site for some years, the processing shed and other buildings had been erected without an application by Newall to rent the land (DEP PF 2593, Secretary for Lands to Newall, 29 February 1956). The Lands Department issued him with the lease while the Department of Public Health asked for several minor works to be done to bring the sheds up to standard. The annual harvest was estimated to be approximately 7,000 to 10,000 birds. The Newall family worked Hunter Island until 1976 when the lease was transferred to N. Young of Smithton for \$1. Young rebuilt the living quarters and sold his interests the following year to Colin Cure for \$2,500. Cure worked the rookery intermittently, catching some 2,000 to 3,000 birds each season he operated. Since 1989 the rookery has not been worked.

The much larger rookery at the northern end of Hunter Island has also been worked irregularly over the years. All birds were flown off for processing in Smithton or nearby. In 1966 Patrick Maguire, the lessee of Hunter Island, objected to Phillip Newall's application for the lease of the rookery as Maguire had built a barge especially to take birds off the rookery to Smithton for processing (DEP PF 2593, Maguire to Secretary for Lands, 25 June 1966). Maguire did not catch muttonbirds personally, but left it to his sons who contracted to catch birds for other operators such as Bill Vincent and Frank O'Reilly. Vincent last had catchers working the northern end in 1979, while O'Reilly worked the rookery throughout the 1980s and early 1990s as required to fill his orders.

NEW YEAR ISLAND

Lying about 1 km off the west coast of King Island, and covering an area of 109 ha, New Year Island has had a long history of human occupation, being visited by Aborigines and settled by non-Aborigines early after discovery by sealers (Murray *et al.* 1982: 88). In 1866 the presence of 'self-sown vegetables' was noticed (AOT LSD 1/51/621), presumably the remains of an abandoned camp whose history is forgotten. Paradoxically, it has never been an important commercial muttonbird island, but its history is better known than for some of the other important commercial rookeries in the Hunter Group.

The island is known to have been harvested for commercial purposes early in the twentieth century (*King Island News* 1 April 1970). It is unlikely that harvesting began much earlier, because King Island was virtually unoccupied until the 1890s and there were rookeries closer to mainland Tasmania available for exploitation. In March 1906 it was recorded that W. P. (Bill) Scott was proposing "to bird New Year Island" (*King Island Record* 4 March 1906). In 1906 25 casks of muttonbirds were shipped out of Currie, the main population centre on King Island. For the following two years, the exports were 25 and 32 casks respectively (*King Island News* 11, 18, 25 April 1917). It is not known whether these casks of birds came from New Year Island, but this is likely as there were few large rookeries on King Island at that time that could have supported commercial muttonbirding (Skira and Davis 1987: 1). Assuming each cask held 400 muttonbirds, about 7,000 to 12,000 birds were being caught each season. It appears that muttonbirding was intermittent as no further shipments from King Island were recorded.

It is undoubtedly to be regretted that the shipment of muttonbirds etc. should have been discontinued for it does not appear at all evident why

further efforts in these directions should not have been maintained (*King Island News* 25 April 1917).

From 1912 to 1916 there were several applications to lease the island for grazing purposes but these were refused due to the muttonbird rookery. In 1920 the island was reserved as a sanctuary for muttonbirding (*Tasmanian Government Gazette* 23 March 1920: 693). Bill Scott continued to work New Year Island intermittently for many years with a crew of about four men. One of his workers for two seasons was Bill Thow, who moved to King Island in 1922 with his parents and brothers. Scott paid him £2 a week plus keep, which according to Thow made him "...a millionaire. I was there for six weeks and had twelve pounds. I could buy two pairs of dungarees, and three singlets with a pound" (Bill Thow interview). During the season, Scott regularly left the island for the weekend to buy groceries and do other business. The others would pick him up from the beach opposite New Year Island when they saw smoke from his signal fire. The barrels of salted birds were picked up each fortnight by the *Tambar* and shipped to Melbourne for sale:

It would anchor offshore a bit and we'd take these birds out, five or six barrels at a time or four barrels or whatever, that boat. The *Tambar* would be there about an hour, no more than an hour and a half just to load them on (Bill Thow interview).

In the early 1940s Scott took on Cliff Day, who was born on Flinders Island, and had worked in the 1920s on all the muttonbird islands in Franklin Sound. Scott was described thus by Cliff Day:

He was a tall old chap and pretty bloody ancient like. He had New Years Island, he leased it for God knows how many years. He fished up there, done a bit of muttonbirding. He was behind the times...You see he wasn't educated, he wouldn't know Arthur from Martha as far as figures and money is concerned. Poor old Bill Scott when he died, never had a cracker (Cliff Day interview).

Scott continued to hold the lease, and when tenders were called for it in 1948, he requested the Lands Department to give him adjoining Christmas Island if he was outbid for New Year Island (DEP PF 8583, Scott to Minister for Lands and Works, 22 January 1948). In stating his case for New Year Island, Scott included as improvements the slaughter of 2,375 snakes in the first 12 months of his lease. The snakes had killed all

"twenty turkey hens and three gobblers costing one pound apiece for hens & five pounds apiece for gobblers". By this time Bill Scott was an old man and some years earlier had talked Cliff Day into going muttonbirding on his own. A fisherman by trade, Day continued until 1955 when, during rough weather and unable to fish, he salted down some 1,000 muttonbirds. He built a processing shed with a concrete floor, but was handicapped by lack of experienced shed hands:

This muttonbirding you got to be good or you're not worth your tucker up to a point, if you understand what I mean. You couldn't get a brand new chum and take him muttonbirding and say he was a good man in one season. You want two seasons before you get the best out of him. He's learning all the time (Cliff Day interview).

Day also used the island for grazing purposes, running some 150 sheep in 1950, but only 12 in 1968 (DEP PF 2465, District Agricultural Officer on King Island to Secretary for Lands, 23 September 1968). In 1956 the island was worked by S. Edwards who took 1,560 birds, some oil and one bag of feathers. This was the last year that commercial muttonbirding occurred on New Year Island.

Attempts were made concurrently to work the rookeries around the coast of King Island. During the 1955 season, the owner of a shop at Currie caught 100 birds, but was unable to sell them from his shop, probably because people who wanted muttonbirds could take them themselves at any of the 20 rookeries around the island (AOT AA 612/23/10, Inspector McIntyre to Secretary of ABPB, 26 March 1956). The last attempt to market muttonbirds caught on King Island was made in 1958. A Mr Golubic imported cardboard cartons from Melbourne for the purpose of packing and despatching birds to the Melbourne market, but did not obtain sufficient birds and the venture failed (AOT AA 612/24/12, Constable Edwards to Secretary of ABPB, 8 May 1958).

SUMMARY

Apart from Trefoil Island, commercial muttonbirding in northwest Tasmania developed slowly until the 1950s when interest in the island's potential saw muttonbirding become established on a wider scale. Since the mid-1960s more muttonbirds have been caught in the Hunter than the Furneaux Group.

Small quantities of birds were taken from Trefoil Island shortly after it came under ownership of the VDL Co. in the 1830s. They were used to feed the company's farm

hands and their families. It was operated as a sheep run and small commercial muttonbird enterprise by a number of people till the Nichols, and then the Luck families worked the island with Aborigines from Cape Barren Island. In the early 1970s up to 200,000 birds were taken annually. The Aborigines looked upon the island as a means of gaining economic independence, and in 1980 it was purchased by the Commonwealth government for them. During their tenure through the Trefoil Island Aboriginal Corporation, the number of birds caught annually declined to under 100,000 and the Corporation was declared bankrupt in 1990, despite having had its operations underwritten by grants from the Commonwealth. With the failure of the Corporation to run a profitable muttonbirding operation, the Commonwealth government put out the island for tender in 1991, and it was successfully secured by an Aborigine.

Of the other six islands, only Steep, Three Hummock and Walker Islands have been worked regularly since the mid-1970s. Except for Steep Island, on which there is a processing shed, birds are killed, bagged and flown daily to mainland Tasmania for processing. A similar practice occurs on Robbins and Hunter Islands, which are worked intermittently. On New Year Island, some commercial muttonbirding occurred from the early 1900s until 1956.

CHAPTER 13

MUTTONBIRDING, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Nobody is interested in muttonbirding these days. Not the young generation. My generation and the generation after me, and there's this young generation that's what coming now, they don't care if they go muttonbirding. I don't think its the muttonbirding they love but its the money they love. They lay in bed ten, eleven, o'clock. What do they get? Some of them get \$200 or over a fortnight, that's to do nothing. Why go over there and slave your guts out for about \$500 to \$600? That's what they are thinking, which is only true. The young people got to stop and think to help themselves, and see what's in their future (Melvin Everett interview).

Present day muttonbirding practices are remarkably very similar to those adopted in the beginning of the industry. On 12 April 1838 George Augustus Robinson saw Aboriginal women from Wybalenna cleaning and salting muttonbirds on Big Chalky Island (Robinson 1987: 551). The birds were dipped into a cauldron of boiling water for several seconds, then plucked; the entrails were taken out, the wings cut off, and then the birds were salted in a pickle of salt and water in barrels which held some 350 to 400 muttonbirds.

Approximately 75 years later, in 1912, a correspondent to the *Examiner* also described the processing of muttonbirds (*Examiner* 2 May 1912), in a description that fits closely the activity in a muttonbird shed today. Then, as now, hessian sacks covered openings between the pluck room and the scalding room to prevent feathers blowing into the scalding room; the scalding pot, full of boiling water, was set in stone or brickwork with a woodfire underneath; and the scalders had bags on their knees when cleaning. Cleaned birds were placed on a grass floor to cool prior to opening. To comply with modern

health regulations, birds today are placed on plastic lined wire mesh set off the ground. Oil and feathers were collected, as today.

The industry in 1912 was also guided, as now, by regulations that governed occupation of crown land, licensing of muttonbirders, season dates and the conservation of muttonbirds, and laid down health standards of processing and packing that encompassed the whole meat slaughter industry, including muttonbirds.

Currently, administration involves the Departments of Health and Parks, Wildlife and Heritage, while the erection of living quarters and processing sheds is subject to building regulations. For the rookeries on reserved land, operators require from the Department of Parks, Wildlife and Heritage a temporary lease (\$100), renewable annually, to enable them to build and occupy sheds. Once the Department of Health passes the sheds, the Department of Parks, Wildlife and Heritage issues a licence to the operator (\$50) to catch and sell and a licence to the catcher (\$10) to take birds. Pluckers and other shed hands are no longer required to have licences. However, if the Department has grounds for not allowing a particular rookery to open, or a particular operator to work it, no licences are issued. Such grounds recently have included damage to rookeries by fire and flood, unsatisfactory condition of processing sheds, and illegal occupation of rookeries. The export of birds is regulated by the Commonwealth Wildlife Protection (Regulation of Exports and Imports) Act, 1982, which is administered by the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service. It restricts export of native wildlife or its products to specimens taken in accordance with an approved management program. In the case of muttonbirds the management program is written by the Department of Parks, Wildlife and Heritage and prescribes measures to keep harvesting to safe levels, based on knowledge of the biology of muttonbirds. For present day muttonbirding no quotas or bag limits apply because the number of birds harvested is under safe limits.

CURRENT MUTTONBIRDING PRACTICES AND ROUTINES

Throughout the history of muttonbirding, the processing of muttonbirds was generally divided into gender roles. Men caught, killed and carried the birds to the processing shed on a spit which held about 50 birds. There they squeezed the oil out and threw the birds into the pluck house where they were plucked and scalded by either men or women; children usually cut off the legs prior to scalding and did other small but essential tasks, such as brushing and laying out the birds on racks; men usually opened, salted and packed the birds into casks, although women helped out when the men were in the

rookery (*Examiner* 26 April 1892). Cooking and looking after the children was a female task:

And they [men] used to get up about five and go out as soon it was daylight. We'd get up and get the breakfast ready and they'd go out and bring in a load of muttonbirds before breakfast. Mum would stay and clean up the house and my brother and I, or my sister and I, they were all younger than I was, we immediately have to go out and brush the birds or put them on the rack to cool and all the rest of it. Mum never had a cook. She worked in the shed and worked in the house and looked after us too. Men would pluck and we would do the cleaning and cut off the wings. Children cut the legs off. That not a very hard job, but still it had to be done. And we'd clean them, then someone would be brushing up, putting those birds to cool. But the ones that we brought in and we hadn't had our breakfast, they were racked. Well Mum would go in and open those (Dorothy Cook interview).

Present day participants are mainly adults as very few children now accompany their parents to the islands. Babies are no longer taken to the islands. The gathering of families and friends is one of the respected traditions of muttonbirding, aided by the financial incentive:

Yes it's the muttonbirding itself. The money is important but you've got to take that away because there is also the community that's sitting out there that's not actually muttonbirding and they try to get themselves across to the island. They try to scheme to get muttonbirds as well you see. So it is important. Of course, lets be realistic, money is important as well but is not the only thing (Karen Brown interview).

'Harvesting is centred on 'the shed', which is a collection of buildings where people live and process the birds. These buildings are usually located near the coast because in past years all transport to and from the islands was by boats. Today some islands have airstrips. The person in charge of all the operations is called the 'shed boss', a job without gender, shared equally between men and women.

Catching is invariably done by the men. It is a strenuous activity. The men get up before dawn, make themselves a drink and light a cigarette, and by sunrise are out in the rookery, colloquially termed 'the bush'. The birds are caught by two, three, or

sometimes more people, who usually work their way systematically through the rookery. On Great Dog Island, where owners share the rookery, each share is delineated and markers and boundaries are well known.

Burrows are on average an arm's length deep. The chick is killed instantly by a quick flick of the wrist which snaps the neck. The method of crushing the skull is used by very few muttonbirders. They are then brought to the shed either on a spit (Plate 13) or by mechanised transport such as a tractor or motorbike within 30 minutes of being caught, as birds are easier to pluck when warm.

At the shed the stomach contents are emptied into a container by holding the bird upside down and squeezing the stomach. The stomach oil is separated from the food at a later stage by straining through a hessian bag. The waste, termed 'gurry', is discarded. The oil, which sells for about \$10 per litre (1990 price), is presently used for medicinal purposes, stock feed and as liniment for race horses and race dogs. It is becoming more difficult to sell each year.

Next, the bird is thrown into the pluck house through an opening, a so called 'window', covered with a hessian bag curtain. Up to three people, sitting on boxes, quickly pluck the bird, taking care not to tear it (Plate 14). Damaged carcasses are rejected and used as everyday eating birds. The hessian bag curtain prevents feathers and down from being blown about. The feathers are bagged and sold to a feather mill in Melbourne as fill for doonas and pillows. But as with the oil, feathers have been difficult to sell in the last two years, possibly because they are of poorer quality than goose and duck feathers, and because they are produced in small quantities:

Well the goose's feather is the better feather than duck. Duck feather is a good feather and muttonbird feather is as good as the duck feather, but the muttonbird down which you get from the muttonbird is not as good as the duck down. The muttonbird down seems to roll up into a ball and it is very hard to get a material to hold it. It's got a tendency to leak, that is to say that muttonbird fibre goes through the material.

Well, you see we use about three tonnes of feathers per week here, we've got to use that. And of course, there's not much muttonbird over on the islands, you'd only buy about two or three tonne a year (Ray Boxer interview).

After plucking the feet are cut off at the knee joint and the plucked bird is thrown through another hessian covered opening into the cleaning shed (room). Frequently the legs are cut off in the cleaning shed, the sequence depending on the custom or tradition of the person doing the operation.

The cleaning room contains one or two metal drums, termed scalding pots, set in concrete. Holding approximately 20 l of sea water, they are brought to the boil by wood or gas fire and topped up regularly during the day. Sitting on wooden boxes alongside the scalding pot, two or three people (rarely more), each holds a plucked bird by the wings and dips it into the boiling water up to its neck for about five seconds (Plate 15), slaps it against the side of the pot or seat to remove excess water and then places it on a hessian bag draped over the cleaner's knee to clean of down. The end product is a bare skinned carcass. The bird is then thrown through another hessian bag window into the opening room.

The cleaning and opening rooms are built to be fly-proof by the use of hessian bag coverings and fly-screen doors. In the opening room any loose down adhering to the birds is brushed off before they are laid out on racks to cool prior to the opening process. The carcasses take about an hour to cool down but usually several hours elapse before they are opened (Plate 16). This is because the opener may have several hundred birds to open and may also be doing other tasks such as cleaning around the shed or helping out in the rookery. The sequence varies but one consists of cutting out the cloacal opening or vent, including the tail, cutting off the head and wings, and finally eviscerating the body cavity. Another sequence commonly used is to cut off the tail, split open the carcass and cut off the head, and remove the gut before cutting off the wings to finish the procedure. Opening requires a sharp knife and the job is usually the preserve of men. A fast opener can do up to five birds a minute though the average is somewhere around four. The offal is thrown into the sea. Seagulls and other marine life scavenge on it and the beach is cleaned remarkably quickly, leaving a tide-line of wings and heads that gradually disappear during the year.

The final step is packing the finished product for the market either as 'fresh' or salted birds. 'Fresh' birds are packed into grease proof cardboard cartons, or cartons lined with plastic, and stored in freezers. Salting consists of rubbing the bird in loose salt and packing it into plastic casks which hold approximately 60 birds. The combination of birds and salt produces a brine which is topped up further by a seawater brine. This is made by mixing seawater and salt to such a concentration that a potato floats in it. In the pre-1950s, when freezing facilities were non-existent, all birds were salted and packed



Plate 13. Rodney Newell carrying in muttonbirds on a spit on Great Dog Island, March 1990 (Source: I. Skira).



Plate 14. Rodney Newell plucking muttonbirds on Great Dog Island, March 1990 (Source: I. Skira).



Plate 15. In the scalding room on Steep Island in April 1988. From left: David Sainty and Doug Lowery (Source: I. Skira).

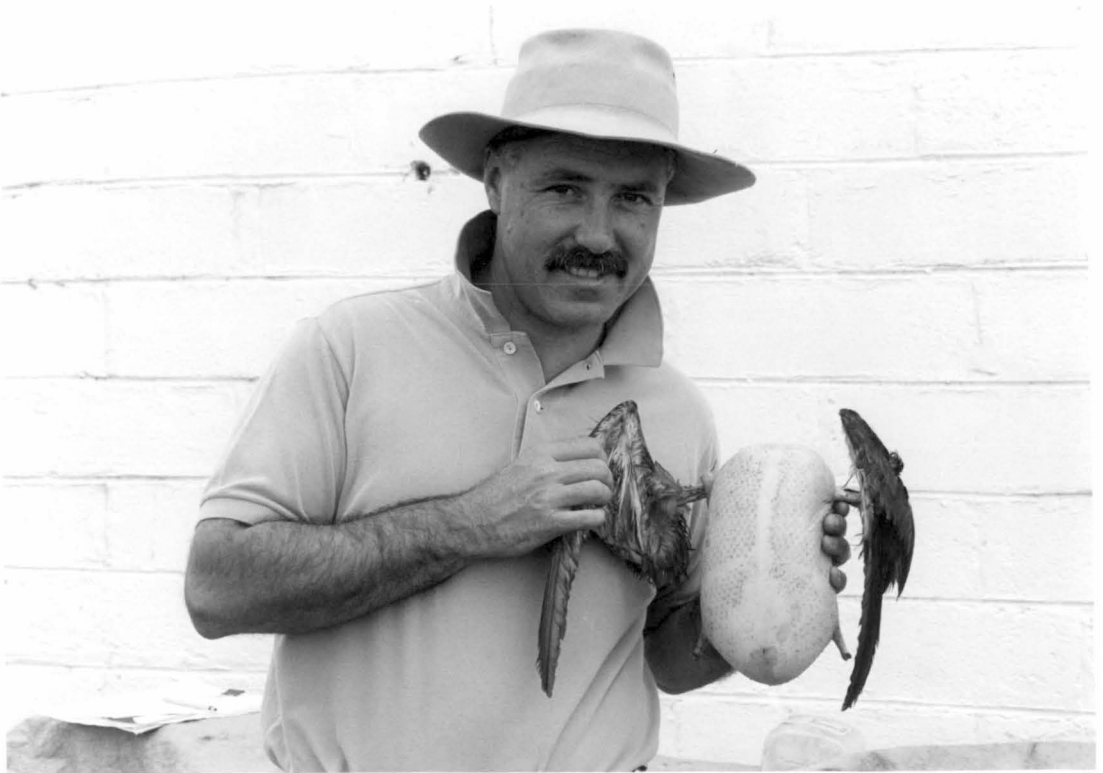


Plate 16. Joe Conti, health inspector, holding a freshly cleaned muttonbird on Great Dog Island in 1991 (Source: I. Skira).

into wooden barrels that held between 400 and 500 birds. Now muttonbirds are only salted on Babel and Steep Islands, where there are no airstrips and the islands are too distant from freezer facilities, and sometimes on other islands to fill specific orders.

The technology used in the industry is basic and based on a labour intensive process that requires skills that can only be picked up through practice. The reminiscences of Marge Mansell, a muttonbirder for many years, convey the activity in a typical day in the shed:

The normal day start would be after sunrise. I couldn't tell you the exact time. The men would leave to go into the rookery, we'd have a cup of tea and a snack, slice of cake or biscuit and a bit of cheese and something like that. And then would go. We had to make sure that the pot didn't boil over because if it boils and you don't keep topping it up it eventually busts, holes. So we used to keep an eye on that, we used to have long pieces of wood pushed under the scalding pot, didn't have gas in those days. Make sure the wood was pushed up under the pot, keep it boiling, so the water was hot and ready for when they came in. We had to put clean grass in the shed, make sure our cans of water was filled and then we'd potter about here until they came in.

Whenever they came in they started to pluck the birds, we had to sit next to the scalding pot and we would be there most of the day. Hardly any breaks. Breakfast around about between half past eight and nine and then we would go through until lunch time. Everyone has a hot breakfast, even now, and then they'd go through to lunch time and they'd make anything do for lunch. Then we'd work from lunch till they got the last load in just before dark. Some of them wouldn't work so hard. We'd come and finish them off and then the men would take over from there. When we finished we had to clean the shed out, make sure the grass, we had to walk up the side of the hill and cut our grass for the next day. We'd make sure that the sticks were got for the men to light the fire the next day, that's the little morning sticks, we'd break the sticks, bring them back.

Have our water there for the beginning of next day and then the men would go to the opening sheds and split them, do that, and salt them. We never had any fresh birds, we salted all our birds. That went on for five and a half days of a week. Some of them would work all day Saturday

but most of them worked to get a bit of time so we could have a bit of free time on Sunday (Marge Mansell interview).

SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS

A study of the muttonbird industry in 1985 (Skira 1987) showed how little it had changed over the years and how similar each season is. As in previous years, the muttonbirders in 1985 worked a six-day week, taking Sunday off for washing clothes, resting and preparing for the next week. The work is generally regarded as hard, hot and dirty, but the season is still classed as one of the main social events of the year. Most shed owners have workers of long standing who they invite each year and who know that there is always a job for them in the same shed. The age of the majority of muttonbirders is over 40 years.

Boundaries of sites are usually defined by natural landforms and are well known to operators. Since 1978 there have been between thirteen and sixteen shed bosses. Today, most of the people in the industry are Aborigines, whether they are shed bosses, catchers, or shed hands. Of the 13 operators in 1985, 7 were Aboriginal, and a total of approximately 150 people, of whom 64 were catchers, were employed in the industry during the 1985 season.

For the remainder of the year, the majority of muttonbirders were unemployed. Two of the six non-Aboriginal operators classed themselves as generally unemployed, and all the Aboriginal operators except one were unemployed, although two had intermittent work. Benefits can be claimed by unemployed people, for which the single adult rate in March 1985 was \$90 per week. By December 1992 the rate was \$138 per week. Of the operators in 1985 who had jobs, two were fishermen/farmers, two were farmers, and one an air charter pilot. Most catchers and shed hands were unemployed and received unemployment benefits. For many of them, therefore, the muttonbird season was financially important.

The gross income derived from the sale of birds, feathers and oil in 1985 was \$328,000 (Table 15). Approximately half the birds were sold locally and the other half exported to New Zealand. The gross income was higher for the Hunter Group because of the greater number of birds caught there. After processing, birds were sold for \$1.16 to \$1.35 each. Operators on Great Dog Island in the Furneaux Group, who sold fresh birds for 70 cents each to a local fish processing factory in Lady Barron, had the lowest gross income. These operators got 85 cents each for salted birds. The factory, after paying for

freight, casks and salt, sold the birds for \$1.30 each. The major change since 1985 has been a doubling in the price of birds from the Furneaux Group, and a 40 percent increase in the Hunter Group, both largely brought about through inflation.

Very little supplementary business is generated by the muttonbird industry, and no one depends on it for a living. The largest business at present is in the freight of birds. In 1985 two air charter companies in Smithton grossed \$15,000 in carrying birds, people and goods to and from the Hunter Group. In the Furneaux Group a fishing boat picked up fresh birds daily from Great Dog Island and salted birds at the end of the season from Babel Island. The value of this freight depended on the number of birds carried but was around \$3,000. The fish processing factory employed six extra staff during the season to process the birds, and in 1985 paid out \$3,000 in wages.

Table 15. Monetary Value of the 1985 Commercial Muttonbird Season.

	Furneaux Group	Hunter Group	Total
Number of operators	9	4	13
Income (\$)	119,500	208,800	328,300
Expenses (\$)	73,400	173,400	246,800
Profit (\$)	46,100	35,400	81,500

(Source: Skira 1987: 70)

Profits varied considerably. In the Furneaux Group the profit for nine operators ranged from \$2,600 to \$11,000, averaging \$5,100, and in the Hunter Group, with four operators, profit averaged \$8,800 and ranged between "no profit" on Trefoil Island and \$24,200. All operators except two regarded the profits as very important to their annual income. The two exceptions were a fisherman/farmer and a farmer, both from the Furneaux Group. However, all operators go muttonbirding for financial reasons, though some Aborigines said tradition was their primary reason.

Main operating overheads are wages, food and freight, of which wages are usually two thirds of all expenses. The cost of maintaining sheds averages only several hundred dollars annually. Substantial costs of capital equipment such as stoves and electrical generators are periodic expenses. Few operators insure their sheds, and if they are destroyed by fire, the cost of rebuilding can be considerable.

Wages vary greatly depending on experience and in 1985 were paid on an agreed five-week seasonal contract. Catchers were paid between \$700 and \$1,600, with the average around \$1,000. Shed hands generally received less than \$1,000, the average being \$700. The muttonbird season provides the only opportunity for most of these participants to have a large amount of money to spend on expensive items such as furniture, cars or any other goods:

You get one thousand dollars, you wouldn't make that over four weeks anyway. So he's got something to stand by with when he comes home. "I'm going to go back on the dole, so I can buy something with this". Bit of furniture or whatever. But mainly, all of them go just to, if they want to buy something and they can't afford it out of their dole, they go just so they can buy it. That's the reason why a lot of them go. One of the main reasons (Doug Lowery interview).

You get a lump sum but the time you work, the hours you work you don't really get much at all when you think about it. But it's alright when you get your pay packet. Get what you want to get, go buy them. Don't take long to go, that's the only bad thing about it. You work five weeks for that money, she's gone in a couple of days (Robert Hughes interview).

Most sheds employed two or three catchers and one or two shed hands. On Trefoil Island, 20 catchers worked in 4 sheds, and another 50 people were paid anything between \$400 and \$1,500 for the season. On Walker and Three Hummock Islands there were only catchers employed, and birds were killed, bagged and flown off the islands daily for processing in the small country towns of Smithton and Boat Harbour respectively, where they were sold locally as 'fresh' birds.

AMATEUR MUTTONBIRDING AND PUBLIC OPINION: THEIR EFFECT ON THE INDUSTRY

The recent history of commercial muttonbirding has been affected by amateur (non-commercial) muttonbirding and public opinion only to a small extent. In this context, the term 'public opinion' is a broad category that encompasses the community's concern for the environment and for the welfare of animals, and a trend of increasing aversion towards the hunting of wildlife. Under the Animal and Birds Protection Act, 1928, only one type of muttonbird licence existed to take birds. People could either take birds to sell or for home consumption. However, few people took birds for home use until the 1950s following the expansion of rookeries that commenced in the 1920s, combined with the more ready availability of cars and boats. It peaked in 1977 when 7,924 amateur licences were sold, many of them bought by people going to rookeries on Bruny Island and around southern Tasmania. For example, on the 1976 opening day of the season at Cape Queen Elizabeth on Bruny Island, there were 500 people including babies in pushers, and 200 cars at the rookery, which was only accessible by a rough, 5 km long track (Skira, unpublished).

With such a large number of people concentrated on the rookeries (many of which were less than 5 ha in area), problems were perceived of over-exploitation, physical damage to rookeries by muttonbirders, and the presence of small children joining in the catching (PWH W2/5/7 Volume 2, Lohrey, Minister for PWH to Davis, 18 April 1979). Surveys in the 1970s of Cape Queen Elizabeth and rookeries close to Hobart revealed harvesting rates of 90 percent and more (Skira and Wapstra 1980: 236). These compared with a calculated safe harvest level of 37 percent (Skira *et al.* 1986: 233). These problems led to the season being shortened by two weeks, and an on-going publicity campaign giving possible solutions through the issue of a leaflet. These measures had little impact and further restrictions of closing rookeries and reducing the daily bag limit were enforced during the 1980s.

Anti-amateur muttonbirding feeling grew from the early 1980s with articles in the press expressing that sentiment (*Mercury* 31 March 1981; *Weekend Australian* 24-25 March 1984), and a flood of protests to the government. In the mid-1980s concerns were expressed by the general public concerning alleged cruelty because of the methods used to kill chicks. Many amateur muttonbirders held the bird by the head and swung the body around in the air, in a windmill fashion. Quite often the body tore off, leaving the muttonbirder holding only the head. This method was considered to cause needless suffering rather than instantaneous death. The carnival atmosphere of the season,

particularly on opening day when many muttonbirders were affected by alcohol and left their rubbish scattered around rookeries, also brought the season into disrepute.

In September 1984 the Wildlife Advisory Committee, instituted under the National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1970 to advise the National Parks and Wildlife Service, passed a motion that there should be a state-wide closure of all rookeries every second year, that the bag limits should be reduced by half, and that grazing on rookeries should be reviewed. Its backing gave weight to departmental pressure to restrict the season, but nothing was done, and the publicity fuelled by television footage of the 1985 and 1986 opening days drew more attention to the season. The environmental organisation Greenpeace voiced its protests, and in the following year several members formed TASS, Tasmanians Against Shearwater Slaughter. They began by writing to the Minister for PWH (PWH W2/5/7 Volume 4, Nicol to Bennett, 27 March 1986). Two years later they raised their profile by dumping offal, heads, entrails and bodies of muttonbirds in the Minister's office (*Examiner* 9 April 1988). In the meantime the government had closed the 1987 season on mainland Tasmania, except for the west coast. This did not placate TASS which on "April Fool's Day" 1989 smuggled backpacks of muttonbird feathers into the Minister's office, spreading them everywhere, while parading a sign reading "STOP THE BLOODY BIRDING" (*Examiner* 2 April 1989).

In 1987 the National Parks and Wildlife Service was amalgamated with the Department of Lands to form the Department of Lands, Parks and Wildlife. Two years later, under an incoming Labor government, the former Service was virtually recreated under the name of Department of Parks, Wildlife and Heritage. The election of a government more sympathetic towards environmental matters brought about more restrictions on amateur muttonbirding. Because of a previous unsuccessful attempt to close amateur muttonbirding everywhere in Tasmania (including the Bass Strait islands) by the former Liberal government, and with a new Labor government now in office, there was vigorous representation from local community leaders against closure and in favour of allowing amateur muttonbirding to continue (PWH W2/5/7 Volume 7, Council Clerk Vickers of Municipality of Zeehan to Jackson, Minister for PWH, 20 December 1989). Nevertheless, restrictions were put in place, and amateur muttonbirding was only permitted in the Furneaux Group, the Hunter Group, the King Island group of islands and on the west coast of Tasmania (Callister 1991: 8). Daily bag limits were halved from 50 to 25 birds on the islands, and from 25 to 15 on the west coast. In the last few years, following the disbandment of TASS in 1990, the furore has quietly died.

The criticisms of amateur muttonbirding did not affect the commercial industry, mainly because people were unwilling to campaign against Aboriginal people who regard muttonbirding as a vital part of their culture. The industry also did not have the problems of alcohol and alleged cruelty to chicks, while the rookeries did not suffer from over-harvesting because they were much larger. A solitary protest came from the Australian and New Zealand Federation of Animal Societies (ANZFAS), which wrote twice to the Minister responsible for the National Parks and Wildlife Service requesting that commercial muttonbirding be phased out as the industry was of little economic significance, and alternative products were available (PWH W2/5/7 Volume 4, McEwan, President of ANZFAS to Bennett, 15 April 1986; Volume 5, 22 February 1988). The Australian and New Zealand Federation of Animal Societies believed it mattered little that Aborigines participated, saying "who perpetrates it should carry no weight". The Federation did not voice its opinions to Aboriginal communities, and its views were disregarded by the government. No other protest has been made against commercial muttonbirding.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Currently, about 150 people are directly involved in the muttonbird industry. The way of life is unique as the catching of petrels on such a large scale and with such a long tradition does not occur anywhere else in the world. The intricate processing procedure and its associated terminology has also not been duplicated anywhere else. The musty smell of the birds pervades the whole atmosphere on the islands. It is not offensive but its presence brings to mind everything connected with the traditions of muttonbirding. The majority of participants are Aborigines, and for them the five week season is an opportunity to meet friends and family they have not seen since the previous year. Participants look eagerly forward to the season. A modern day muttonbirder is no different from one of former times, even if, instead living on Cape Barren Island, he or she lives now in suburbia:

And when birding time comes now we still get that all worked up feeling, like, can't wait. So start talking about it and you are getting all keyed up to go. With Trefoil now, like, to go over, I go over and mow the airstrips and the tracks out and everything, clean up like that. Have everything ready for when we do go. So I get a taste of it before the birding actually starts (Kim Stonehouse interview).

Financially, the season provides the Aborigines an opportunity to accumulate a large sum of money to buy major items that otherwise would be luxuries they could not afford or would find difficult to save for. Tradition and the chance to earn a large lump sum go together.

Since the 1980s the industry has largely been left to itself. The role of government and local authorities is to administer licences and leases, health regulations and building codes. Muttonbirders have accepted the fact that sheds need regular maintenance and are also more environmentally aware with regard to rubbish. Those on Great Dog Island take the rubbish accumulated during the season to the local dump at Lady Barron. The muttonbirders find their own markets, and health standards have largely been set by consumers who are much more aware of health risks than in the past. Problems have arisen, but do not seem to be made into an issue as they were in the past.

The major problem that is slowly being resolved is the perennial conflict between muttonbirders and graziers. Steep, Three Hummock and Babel Islands are not grazed, and sheep were run on Great Dog Island until 1991 when, under the current lease, grazing was restricted to the original home paddock which contains no muttonbird burrows. About 100 sheep were once kept on Trefoil Island but have been removed. Hunter Island is held under a grazing lease and while in the past cattle occasionally wandered over the rookeries, this now rarely happens. Walker Island is private land, and though the owners rent out the muttonbirding rights each year, cattle have been allowed to wander over the rookeries during the season to the anger of the catchers and operator. Physical damage to burrows by sheep is regarded as not detrimental to the breeding of muttonbirds (Norman 1970: 215), although they eat tussocks and herbaceous plants between the tussocks, thereby exposing the soil to water and wind erosion. Most damage by stock, especially cattle, is through soil erosion and grazing, particularly after fire.

The importance of muttonbirding to Aborigines has also changed since they moved off Cape Barren Island to seek work in mainland Tasmania. It seems to be viewed more and more as a 'novelty' event, especially as attempts are made to recapture its past importance in the culture of Aborigines (Anonymous 1986: 3). For the Aborigines who lived on Cape Barren Island, muttonbirding was a subsistence bush economy which Robinson and Ghostkeeper (1987: 139) describe as a livelihood reliant on renewable resource gathering and harvesting. Such an economy results in a strong relationship between human social groups and their resource base (Usher and Wenzel 1987: 149) — in this case muttonbirds and other native wildlife (wallabies in particular). Work, leisure,

family life and life generally become intertwined into a cohesive whole which, according to Robinson and Ghostkeeper (1987: 140), tends to be information rich and mass poor; that is, people know their environment extremely well but are poor in material possessions. Another feature of a bush economy is that the household unit is generally stable over time and endures for many years. The Aboriginal community of Bass Strait exemplifies this feature, for it lasted well over 100 years in the Furneaux Group before dissipating throughout Tasmania. The differences between it and other Tasmanian communities brought about through lack of money, lifestyle and isolation, always made the Aborigines conspicuous, surviving all attempts to make them conform to the 'norm'. Although they are now geographically dispersed, this is still the case.

What future the industry has is a question that few muttonbirders ask themselves. Some hold no hope for it because of their disillusionment with the young generation of Aborigines:

Well, I don't know, it's just not like it used to be, put it that way. The people have changed. There's too many drugs and whatever going on in the world today. Unless they got a beer or something, they are not interested (Doug Lowery interview).

Most muttonbirders in the industry are over the age of 40 years and were raised on Cape Barren Island. They have a tradition of the hard physical work involved in muttonbirding. For them the tradition of participating is probably as strong as going muttonbirding for the money. With regard to the young generation of Aborigines, the majority are urbanised and few go muttonbirding. Those that do mostly live in northern Tasmania. Being closer to the muttonbird islands they are more easily encouraged to go than Aborigines living in Hobart. Conversely, the presence of a high long-term unemployment rate among Aborigines means that there is a large pool of young unemployed people, some of whom may be persuaded to go muttonbirding regularly.

Over the years there has been a general decline in annual harvests, due not to a diminishing resource but to a number of other reasons: the lack of exposure to the tradition of muttonbirding in the present generation of Tasmanians; lack of interest in a greasy product which can be difficult to promote and conflicts with a health conscious society; ever-increasing expenses; and the decline of tradition in young Aborigines which has resulted in less people working in the industry than 20 years ago. The existence of the muttonbird industry in a modern twentieth century western culture seems remarkable. Serventy *et al.* (1971: 44) were correct to note that, had there been no vested interests in

preserving the islands for muttonbirding, many of them may have been 'improved' for domestic stock, and rookeries destroyed in the process. Muttonbirding could therefore be said to have had a conservation role in the past, although that role now is not needed to guarantee preservation of the rookeries. It is a quaint cottage industry that will probably continue in its small way for as long as there are people who will eat muttonbirds.

The future of amateur muttonbirding is not as assured because of the pressure put on the government to curb the activity. At the present time about 600 people participate, and the restrictions placed on the sport appear to have eliminated the anti-social behaviour once associated with it, although safe harvest levels are often surpassed, particularly on some of the small rookeries.

REFERENCES

BOOKS AND ARTICLES

ADAM-SMITH, P., 1983; *There was a Ship*; Nelson, Melbourne.

ALLEN, J., COSGROVE, R. and BROWN, S., 1988; New Archaeological Data from the Southern Forests Region, Tasmania: a Preliminary Statement, *Australian Archaeology* **27**, 75-88.

ANONYMOUS, 1982; Tasmanian Aboriginals and their Struggle for Recognition (1876-1982), in *Tasmanian Year Book 1982*; Australian Bureau of Statistics, Hobart, 510-528.

ANONYMOUS, 1986; New Film Director Role for Jim Everett, *Aboriginal Newsletter* (June), 3.

ANONYMOUS, 1987; *Conserving our Historic Shipwrecks*; State Heritage Branch, South Australia Department of Environment and Planning, 22-23.

ASHMOLE, N. P., 1971; Seabird Ecology and the Marine Environment, in D. S. FARNER and J. R. KING (eds.), *Avian Biology* **1**; Academic Press, New York, 223-286.

ATKINSON, E. D., 1890; Notes of a short Trip to the Islands of Western Bass Strait, *Victorian Naturalist* **6**, 156-164.

AZZARELLO, M. Y. and VAN VLEET, E. S., 1987; Marine Birds and Plastic Pollution, *Marine Ecology Progress Series* **37**, 295-303.

BACKHOUSE, J., 1843; *A Narrative of a Visit to the Australian Colonies*; Hamilton, Adams and Co., London.

BACKHOUSE, J. and TYLOR, C., 1862; *The Life and Labours of George Washington Walker of Hobart Town, Tasmania*; Bennett and Brady, London.

- BAKER, H., 1908; in Notes and Exhibits, *Papers and Proceedings Royal Society of Tasmania*, vii.
- BALDWIN, J. R., 1974; Sea Bird Fowling in Scotland and Faroe, *Folk Life* **12**, 60-103.
- BARKER, B. C., 1991; Nara Inlet 1: Coastal Resource Use and the Holocene Marine Transgression in the Whitsunday Islands, Central Queensland, *Archaeology in Oceania* **26**, 102-109.
- BASS, G., 1798-1802; in D. COLLINS, *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales*, Volumes 1 and 2; Cadell & Davies, London. Libraries Board of South Australia (1971). Australiana Facsimile Edition Number **76**.
- BEAGLEHOLE, J. C., 1967; *The Journals of Captain James Cook on his Voyages of Discovery: The Voyage of the Resolution and Discovery 1776-1780*, Part One; Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- BEGG, A. C. and BEGG, N. C., 1979; *The World of John Boulton*; Whitcoulls, Christchurch.
- BEST, E., 1942; Forest Lore of the Maori, *Dominion Museum Bulletin* **14**.
- BLACKBURN, M., 1980; Observations on the Distribution of *Nyctiphanes australis* Sars (Crustacea, Euphasiidae) in Australian Waters, *CSIRO Division of Fisheries and Oceanography Report Number* **119**.
- BLOM, W. M., 1988; Late Quaternary Sediments and Sea-levels in Bass Basin, Southeastern Australia — A Preliminary Report, *Search* **19**, 94-96.
- BOULTBEE, J., 1986; in J. STARKE (ed.), *Journal of a Rambler — The Journal of John Boulton*; Oxford University Press, Auckland.
- BOURNE, W. R. P., 1967; Subfossil Petrel Bones from the Chatham Islands, *Ibis* **109**, 1-7.
- BOWDEN, K. M., 1964; *Captain James Kelly of Hobart Town*; Melbourne University Press, Melbourne.

- BOWDLER, S., 1974; An Account of an Archaeological Reconnaissance of Hunter's Isles, North-West Tasmania, 1973/4, *Records of Queen Victoria Museum, Launceston* **54**, 1-22.
- BOWDLER, S., 1980; Hunters and Farmers in the Hunter Islands, *Records of Queen Victoria Museum, Launceston* **70**, 1-17.
- BOWDLER, S., 1984; Hunter Hill, Hunter Island, *Terra Australis* **8**.
- BRADLEY, J. S., WOOLLER R. D., SKIRA, I. J. and SERVENTY, D. L., 1989; Age-dependent Survival of Breeding Short-tailed Shearwaters *Puffinus tenuirostris*, *Journal of Animal Ecology* **58**, 175-188.
- BRADLEY, J. S., WOOLLER, R. D., SKIRA, I. J. and SERVENTY, D. L., 1990; The Influence of Mate Retention and Divorce upon Reproductive Success in Short-tailed Shearwaters *Puffinus tenuirostris*, *Journal of Animal Ecology* **59**, 487-496.
- BRADLEY, J. S., WOOLLER, R. D. and SKIRA, I. J., 1991; A Long-term Study of Short-tailed Shearwaters *Puffinus tenuirostris* on Fisher Island, Australia, *Ibis* **133** Supplement 1, 55-61.
- BROADFOOT, J., 1845; An Unexpected Visit to Flinders' Island in Bass's Straits, *Chambers' Edinburgh Journal* **90** (20 September), 187-189.
- BRODKORB, P., 1971; Origin and Evolution of Birds, in D. S. FARNER and J. R. KING (eds.), *Avian Biology* **1**; Academic Press, New York, 19-55.
- BROOKE, M., 1990; *The Manx Shearwater*; T.& A. D. Poyser, London.
- BROTHERS, N. P. B. and DAVIS, G., 1985; Bird Observations on Albatross Island, 1981 to 1985, *Tasmanian Bird Report Number* **14**, 3-9.
- BROTHERS, N. and PEMBERTON, D., 1990; Status of Australian and New Zealand Fur Seals at Maatsuyker Island, Southwestern Tasmania, *Australian Wildlife Research* **17**, 563-569.
- BROTHERS, N. P. B. and SKIRA, I. J., 1987; Seabird Islands No. 173. Chappell Island, Furneaux Group, Tasmania, *Corella* **11**, 81-82.

- BROTHERS, N. P. B. and SKIRA, I. J., 1988; Seabird Islands No. 185. Little Dog Island, Furneaux Group, Tasmania, *Corella* 12, 85-86.
- BROWN, H., 1992; Memories of mutton-birdin' our way, in P. O'BRIEN (ed.), *Wildlife Use and Management*; Bureau of Rural Resources, Canberra, 3-5.
- BROWNRIGG, Rev. Canon Marcus, 1872; *The Cruise of the Freak: A Narrative of a Visit to the Islands in Bass and Banks Straits with some Account of the Islands*; Author, Launceston.
- BROWNRIGG, Rev. Canon Marcus, 1979; in S. MURRAY-SMITH (ed.), *Mission to the Islands: The Missionary Voyages in Bass Strait of Canon Marcus Brownrigg, 1872-1885*; Cat and Fiddle Press, Hobart.
- BRYDEN, W., 1966; Historical Notes, *Papers and Proceedings Royal Society of Tasmania* 100, 21-26.
- BUCKBY, P. Y., 1984; *Around Circular Head*; Denbar Publishers, n. p. (Tasmania).
- BUCKBY, P., 1988; *Robbins Island Saga*; Commercial Finance Company of Tasmania Pty. Ltd., Smithton, Tasmania.
- BUCKBY, P., n. d. (c. 1990); *Legends of Hunter Island*; Shift 85 Pty. Ltd., Hunter Island, Tasmania.
- CALLISTER, D., 1991; Exploitation of the Short-tailed Shearwater in Tasmania, *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 12 (Spring/ Summer), 5-11.
- CAMPBELL, A. J., 1900; *Nests and Eggs of Australian Birds*, Volume 2; Pawson & Brailford, Sheffield, England, 882-892.
- CAMPBELL, B. and LACK, E., 1985; *A Dictionary of Birds*; T. & A. D. Poyser, Calton, England.
- CARTER, I. F., 1965; The Bird Men of Bass Strait, *Blackwood Magazine* 298, 166-173.

- CHISHOLM, A. H., 1962; *Journal of a Voyage to New South Wales by John White*; Angus and Robertson, Sydney.
- CLARK, G., 1948; Fowling in Prehistoric Europe, *Antiquity* **22**, 116-130.
- CLARK, R., 1981; in P. G. FIDLON and R. J. RYAN (eds.), *The Journal and Letters of Lt. Ralph Clark, 1787-1792*; Australian Documents Library, Sydney.
- COLLINS, D., 1798-1802; *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales*, Volumes 1 and 2; Cadell & Davies, London. Libraries Board of South Australia (1971). Australiana Facsimile Edition Number **76**.
- CONDON, H. T., 1975; *Checklist of the Birds of Australia. Part 1. Non-Passerines*; Royal Australian Ornithologists Union, Melbourne.
- COOPER, I., 1959; The Vanishing Mosquito Fleet of Tasmania: Second and Final Part, *The Log* (15 May), 62-63.
- COOPER, I., 1963a; Holyman's White Star Line. A History and Fleet List of Great Australian Shipping Company, *The Log* (19 September), 107-115.
- COOPER, I., 1963b; Holyman's White Star Line. Fleet List Part, *The Log* (21 November), 137-144.
- COOPER, I., 1964; Holyman's White Star Line. Additions, Corrections, *The Log* (16 January), 14-16.
- COUTTS, P. J. F., 1970; The Archaeology of Wilson's Promontory, *Australian Aboriginal Studies* **28**.
- COUTTS, P. J. F., APLIN, K. and TAYLOR, N., 1984; Archaeological investigations at Captains Points, Mallacoota, in P. J. F. COUTTS (ed.), *Coastal Archaeology in South-Eastern Victoria*; Records Victorian Archaeological Survey **14**, 1-184.
- CRITCHETT, J., 1990; A "Distant Field of Murder". *Western Districts Frontiers 1834-1848*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton.

- CRITCHETT, J., 1992; *Our Land till We Die. A History of the Framlingham Aborigines*, Second Edition, Deakin University Press, Warrnabool, Victoria.
- CUMPSTON, J. H. L., 1989; *Health and Disease in Australia*, M. J. LEWIS (ed.); Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.
- CUMPSTON, J. S., 1968; *Macquarie Island*; Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition Scientific Reports, Series A (1), Narrative. Publication Number 93.
- CUMPSTON, J. S., 1973; *First Visitors to Bass Strait*; Roebuck Society Publication Number 7, Canberra.
- DAVIDSON, J. M., 1979; New Zealand, in J. D. JENNINGS (ed.), *The Prehistory of Polynesia*; Australian National University Press, Canberra, 222-248.
- DAVIDSON, J. M., 1984; *The Prehistory of New Zealand*; Longman Paul, Auckland.
- DAVIES, R. H., 1846; Some Account of the Habits and Natural History of the Sooty Petrel (Muttonbird), *Tasmanian Journal of Natural Science* 2, 13-16.
- DAVIES, W., 1935; The Vitamin A and Vitamin D contents of Mutton Bird Oil, *Australian Journal of Experimental Biology and Medical Science* 17, 81-84.
- DAY, R. H., WEHLE, D. H. S. and COLEMAN, F. C., 1985; Ingestion of Plastic Pollutants by Marine Birds, in R. S. SHOMURA and H. O. YOSHIDA (eds.), *Proceedings of the Workshop on the Fate and Impact of Marine Debris*; United States Department of Commerce, NOAA Technical Report, Washington, 344-386.
- DEMENTIEV, G. P. and GLADKOVA, N. A., 1951; *Birds of the Soviet Union*, Volume 2; Soviet Science, Moscow, 370-374.
- DIAMOND, A. W., 1987; A Global View of Cultural and Economic Uses of Birds, in A. W. DIAMOND and F. L. FILION (eds.), *The Value of Birds*; International Council for Bird Preservation Technical Publication Number 6, Cambridge, 99-109.
- EDGECOMBE, J., 1986; *Flinders Island and Eastern Bass Strait*; Edgekirk, Sydney.

- ELWES, R., 1854; *A Sketcher's Tour Round the World*; Hurst and Blackett, London.
- ELWES, R., 1859; Note on the Breeding and mode of Capture of the Short-tailed Petrel, or Mutton Bird (*Puffinus obscurus*), in the Islands in Bass's Straits, *Ibis* **1**, 397-399.
- FEARE, C. J., 1984; Human Exploitation, in J. P. CROXALL, P. G. H. EVANS and R. W. SCHREIBER (eds.), *Status and Conservation of the World's Seabirds*; International Council for Bird Preservation Technical Publication Number **2**, Cambridge, 691-700.
- FISHER, J., 1952; *The Fulmar*; Collins, London.
- FISHER, J. and LOCKLEY, R. M., 1954; *Sea-Birds*; Collins, London.
- FLINDERS, M., 1801; *Observations on the Coasts of Van Diemen's Land, on Bass's Straits, and its Islands, and on Part of the Coasts of New South Wales: Intended to Occupy the Charts of the Late Discoveries in those Countries*; John Nichols, London. Libraries Board of South Australia (1965). Facsimile Edition Number **66**.
- FLINDERS, M., 1814; *A Voyage to Terra Australis*; G. and W. Nicol, London.
- FLOOD, J., 1980; *The Moth Hunters: Aboriginal Prehistory of the Australian Alps*, Australian Institute for Aboriginal Studies, Canberra.
- FORSELL, D. J. and GOULD, P. J., 1981; Distribution and Abundance of Marine Birds and Mammals Wintering in the Kodiak Area of Alaska, *Biological Services Program 81/13*, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington.
- FRIEDMANN, H., 1934a; Bird Bones from Eskimo Ruins on St. Lawrence Island, Bering Sea, *Journal of Washington Academy Science* **24**, 82-96.
- FRIEDMANN, H., 1934b; Bird Bones from Old Eskimo Ruins in Alaska, *Journal of Washington Academy Science* **24**, 230-237.
- FRIEDMANN, H., 1941; Bird Bones from Eskimo Ruins at Cape Prince of Wales, Alaska, *Journal of Washington Academy Science* **31**, 404-409.

- FRIEND, R., 1992; *We Who are Not Here: Aboriginal People of the Huon and Channel Today*; Huon Municipal Association, Huonville, Tasmania.
- FULLAGAR, P., 1976; Providence Petrel, in *Complete Book of Australian Birds*; Reader's Digest, Sydney, 44-45.
- FULLAGAR, R. L. K., 1984; An Archaeological Survey of the Coast from Cape Howe to Wingan Point, including Gabo Island, in P. J. F. COUTTS (ed.), *Coastal Archaeology in South-Eastern Victoria*; Records Victorian Archaeological Survey **14**, 233-257.
- FURNEAUX, T., 1973; in J. S. CUMPSTON, *First Visitors to Bass Strait*; Roebuck Society Publication Number 7, Canberra.
- GEERING, K. E., 1982; An Attempt to Establish the Seasonality of Occupation of the Stockyard Site, Hunter Island, in S. BOWDLER (ed.), *Coastal Archaeology in Eastern Australia*; Department of Prehistory, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, Canberra, 141-147.
- GILLHAM, M. E., 1962; Granite Islands of South-east Victoria as a Seabird Habitat, *Proceedings Royal Society of Victoria* **75**, 45-63.
- GOULD, J., 1848; *Birds of Australia*, Volume 7, Plate 56 and full text; Author, London.
- GOULD, J., 1865; *Handbook to the Birds of Australia*, Volume 2; Author, London, 459-465.
- GOULD, P. J., FORSELL, D. J. and LENSINK, C. J., 1982; Pelagic Distribution and Abundance of Seabirds in the Gulf of Alaska and Eastern Bering Sea, *Fish and Wildlife Service Biological Services Program FWS/OBS — 82/48*; United States Department of Interior, Washington.
- GUILER, E. R., SERVENTY, D. L. and WILLIS, J. H., 1958; The Fisher Island Field Station — With an Account of its Principal Fauna and Flora, *Papers and Proceedings Royal Society of Tasmania* **92**, 165-183.
- GUNN, R. C., 1842; Remarks on the Indigenous Vegetable Productions of Tasmania Available as Food for Man, *Tasmanian Journal of Natural Science* **1**, 35-52.

- GUZMAN, J. R. and MYRES, M. T., 1983; The Occurrence of Shearwaters (*Puffinus* spp.) off the West Coast of Canada, *Canadian Journal of Zoology* **61**, 2064-2077.
- HACKFORTH-JONES, J., 1977; *The Convict Artists*; Macmillan, Sydney.
- HARRIS, S., 1984; A Seal Hunter's Site on Tasman Island, *Australian Archaeology* **19**, 8-14.
- HARRIS, M. P. and NORMAN, F. I., 1981; Distribution and Status of Coastal Colonies of Seabirds in Victoria, *Memoirs National Museum of Victoria* **42**, 89-106.
- HARRIS, G. M., NILSSON, C., CLEMENTSON, L. and THOMAS, D., 1987; The Water Masses of the East Coast of Tasmania: Seasonal and Interannual Variability and the Influence on Phytoplankton Biomass and Productivity, *Australian Journal of Marine and Freshwater Research* **38**, 569-590.
- HARRISON, C. S., 1982; Spring Distribution of Marine Birds in the Gulf of Alaska, *Condor* **84**, 245-254.
- HARTNOLL, W., 1892; *Public Works Statement of the Minister of Lands of Tasmania, (the Hon. William Hartnoll), delivered in the House of Assembly on Wednesday Evening, the 16th November, 1892*, Government Printer, Hobart.
- HAYNES, A. M., 1987; Human Exploitation of Seabirds in Jamaica, *Biological Conservation* **41**, 99-124.
- HOLLOWAY, H. J., 1936; Uses of Mutton Bird Oil (*Oil Puffini*), *Australasian Journal of Pharmacology* (29 February), 101-102.
- HOPE, G. S., 1978; The Late Pleistocene and Holocene Vegetational History of Hunter Island, North-Western Tasmania, *Australian Journal of Botany* **26**, 493-514.
- HOPE, J. H., LAMPERT, R. J., EDMONDSON, E., SMITH, M. J. and VAN TETS, G. F., 1977; Late Pleistocene Faunal Remains from Seton Rock Shelter, Kangaroo Island, South Australia, *Journal of Biogeography* **4**, 363-385.

- HOWARD, M., 1991; Archdeacon Thomas Reibey's 1862 Missionary Voyage to the Islands of Bass Strait, *Tasmanian Historical Research Association Papers and Proceedings* **38**, 78-87.
- HOWELER, J. F., 1961; The Whalers' Legacy to Cape Barren Island, *Food Nutrition Notes Review* **18**, 49-54.
- JACKSON, W. D., 1979; Introduction, in H. GEE and J. FENTON (eds.), *The South West Book: A Tasmanian Wilderness*; Australian Conservation Foundation, Melbourne, 1-3.
- JENNINGS, J. N., 1959; Submarine Topography of Bass Strait, *Proceedings Royal Society of Victoria* **71**, 49-72.
- JENNINGS, J. N., 1969; The Geological History of Bass Strait, in S. MURRAY-SMITH (ed.), *Bass Strait, Australia's Last Frontier*; Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney, 17-25.
- JENNINGS, J. N., 1971; Sea Level Changes and Land Links, in D. J. MULVANEY and J. GOLSON (eds.), *Aboriginal Man and Environment in Australia*; Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1-13.
- JOHNSTON, E., 1991; *Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody*, Volumes 1-5; Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.
- JOHNSTONE, G. W., MILLEDGE, D. and DORWARD, D. F., 1975; The White-capped Albatross of Albatross Island; Numbers and Breeding Behaviour, *Emu* **75**, 1-11.
- JOHNSTONE, R. E., SMITH, L. A. and KLOMP, N. I., 1990a; Seabird Islands No. 203. Wickham Island, Archipelago of the Recherche, Western Australia, *Corella* **14**, 131-132.
- JOHNSTONE, R. E., SMITH, L. A. and KLOMP, N. I., 1990b; Seabird Islands No. 204. Gulch Island, Archipelago of the Recherche, Western Australia, *Corella* **14**, 133-134.

- JONES, R., 1971; The Demography of Hunters and Farmers in Tasmania, in D. J. MULVANEY and J. GOLSON (eds.), *Aboriginal Man and Environment in Australia*; Australian National University Press, Canberra, 271-287.
- JONES, R., 1976; Tasmania: Aquatic Machines and Off-shore Islands, in G. de G. SIEVEKING, I. H. LONGWORTH, and K. E. WILSON (eds.), *Problems in Economic and Social Archaeology*; Duckworth, London, 235-263.
- JONES, R., 1977; Man as an Element of a Continental Fauna: the Case of the Sundering of the Bassian Bridge, in J. ALLEN, J. GOLSON and R. JONES (eds.), *Sunda and Sahul: Prehistoric Studies in Southeast Asia, Melanesia and Australia*; Academic Press, London, 317-386.
- JONES, R., 1987; Bass Strait in Prehistory, in S. MURRAY-SMITH (ed.), *Bass Strait, Australia's Last Frontier* Second Edition; Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney, 27-41.
- JONES, R., 1992; Tom Haydon 1938-1991: Film Interpreter of Australian Archaeology, *Australian Archaeology* **35**, 51-64.
- JONES, R. and ALLEN, J., 1978; Caveat Excavator: a Seabird Midden on Steep Head Island, North West Tasmania, *Australian Archaeological Association Newsletter* **8**, 142-145.
- JONES, R. and ALLEN, J., 1979; A Stratified Archaeological Site on Great Glennie Island, Bass Strait, *Australian Archaeology* **9**, 2-11.
- JONES, R. and ALLEN, J., 1984; Archaeological Investigations in the Andrew River Valley, Acheron River Valley and at Precipitous Bluff — Southwest Tasmania, February 1984, *Australian Archaeology* **19**, 86-101.
- JONES, R. and LAMPERT, R. J., 1978; A Note on the Discovery of Stone Tools on Erith Island, the Kent Group, Bass Strait, *Australian Archaeological Association Newsletter* **8**, 146-149.
- KELLY, J., 1964; in K. M. BOWDEN, *Captain James Kelly of Hobart Town*; Melbourne University Press, Melbourne.

- KERRY, K. R., HORNE, R. S. C. and DORWARD, D. F., 1983; Records of the Short-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus tenuirostris* in Antarctic Waters, *Emu* **83**, 35-37.
- KIERNAN, K., JONES, R. and RANSON, D., 1983; New Evidence from Fraser Cave for Glacial Age Man in South-west Tasmania, *Nature* **301**, 28-32.
- KING, W. B., 1984; Incidental Mortality of Seabirds in Gillnets in the North Pacific, in J. P. CROXALL, P. G. H. EVANS and R. W. SCHREIBER (eds.), *Status and Conservation of the World's Seabirds*; International Council for Bird Preservation Technical Publication Number **2**, Cambridge, 709-715.
- KINSKY, F. C. and ROBERTSON, C. J. R., 1985; *Complete Book of New Zealand Birds*; Reader's Digest, Sydney.
- KURODA, N., 1954; *On the Classification and Phylogeny of the Order Tubinares, Particularly the Shearwaters (Puffinus), with Special Considerations on their Osteology and Habit Differentiation (Aves)*; Author, Tokyo.
- LAMPERT, R. J., 1966; An Excavation at Durras North, New South Wales, *Archaeology and Physical Anthropology in Oceania* **1**, 83-118.
- LAMPERT, R. J., 1971; Burrill Lake and Currarong. Coastal Sites in Southern New South Wales, *Terra Australis* **1**.
- LAMPERT, R., 1981; The Great Kartan Mystery, *Terra Australis* **5**.
- LANE, S. G., 1979; Summary of the Breeding Seabirds in New South Wales Coastal Islands, *Corella* **3**, 7-10.
- LANE, S. G., 1983; Short-tailed Shearwater on Figure of Eight Island, Archipelago of the Recherche, Western Australia, *Emu* **83**, 37-38.
- LATHAM, J., 1781-85; *A General Synopsis of Birds*, Volume 3; Leigh and Sotheby, London, 406, 412.
- LILL, A. and BALDWIN, J., 1983; Weight Changes and the Mode of Depot Fat Accumulation in Migratory Short-tailed Shearwaters, *Australian Journal of Zoology* **31**, 891-902.

- LITTLE, B., 1969; The Sealing and Whaling Industry in Australia before 1850, *Australian Economic History Review* **9**, 109-127.
- LITTLER, F. M., 1910; *A Handbook of the Birds of Tasmania and its Dependencies*; Author, Launceston, 165-169.
- LORD, C. E., 1907; Camp-out of the Tasmanian Field Naturalists on Bruny Island, *Tasmanian Naturalist* **1**, 13-14.
- LYSAGHT, A., 1959; Some Eighteenth Century Bird Paintings in the Library of Sir Joseph Banks (1743-1820), *Bulletin of British Museum (Natural History), Historical Series* **1**, 251-371.
- MANSELL, M., 1978; Land Right's for Tasmania's Aborigines, *Arena* **50**, 92-97.
- MANSELL, M., 1994; Taking Control of Resources, in C. FLETCHER (ed.), *Aboriginal Self-determination in Australia*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra.
- MARSHALL, A. J. and SERVENTY, D. L., 1956; The Breeding Cycle of the Short-tailed Shearwater, *Puffinus tenuirostris* (Temminck), in Relation to Transequatorial Migration and its Environment, *Proceedings Zoological Society of London* **127**, 489-510.
- MARUYAMA, N., OKA, N., WATABE, Y., KURODA, N. and SKIRA, I. J., 1986; Migration Route of Short-tailed Shearwater in North Pacific, in N. KURODA (ed.), *Synthetic Study of the Mass-mortality of Short-tailed Shearwaters*; Yamashina Institute for Ornithology, Abiko, Japan, 36-42.
- MATTHEWS, G. V. T., 1959; Some Aspects of Incubation in the Manx Shearwater *Procellaria puffinus*, with Particular Reference to Chilling Resistance in the Embryo, *Ibis* **96**, 432-440.
- McEVEY, A., 1987; The Father of Australian Ornithology, in M. Lambourne (ed.), *John Gould —Bird Man*; Osberton Production Ltd., London, 56-65.
- MEDWAY, D. G., 1977; The Ellis Bird Drawings, *Turnbull Library Record* **10**, 23-27.

- MEEHAN, B. and R. JONES, 1988; *Archaeology with Ethnography: An Australian Perspective*, Australian National University, Canberra.
- MEEK, P. D. and P. H. O'BRIEN, 1992; *Wildlife Use and Management: Report of a Workshop for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People*. Bureau of Rural Resources Report No. R/2/92, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.
- MESTON, A. L., n. d. (c. 1959); The Van Diemen's Land Company 1825-1842, *Records of Queen Victoria Museum, Launceston, New Series Number 9*, 1-45.
- MICCO, H. M., 1971; *King Island and the Sealing Trade 1802*; Roebuck Society Publication Number 3, Canberra.
- MILLEDGE, D. and N. P. BROTHERS, 1976; Seabird Islands, Maatsuyker Island, Tasmania, *Australian Bird-Bander* 14, 32-34.
- MOLLISON, B. C., 1974; *A Chronology of Events Affecting Tasmanian Aboriginal Ancestors and their Descendants*; Psychology Department, University of Tasmania, Hobart.
- MONTAGUE, T. L., CULLEN, J. M. and FITZHERBERT, K., 1986; The Diet of the Short-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus tenuirostris* during its Breeding Season, *Emu* 86, 207-213.
- MONTGOMERY, H. H., 1891; Some Account of the Mutton Birds, or Sooty Petrels (*Nectris brevicaudus*), as seen in their Homes among the Furneaux Islands, Bass Straits, Tasmania, from Notes taken during a Visit to the Locality in March, 1891, *Papers and Proceedings Royal Society of Tasmania* 1891, 1-10.
- MONTGOMERY, H. H., 1892; A Mutton Bird Island, *New Review* (August), 227-235.
- MONTGOMERY, H. H., 1896; The Protection of Mutton Birds and Seals, *Papers and Proceedings Royal Society of Tasmania* 1894-95, xiii-xvii.
- MONTGOMERY, H. H., 1897; A Night in a Petrel Colony, *Papers and Proceedings Royal Society of Tasmania* 1896, v-vii.

- MORGAN, W. L., 1982; Feeding Methods of the Short-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus tenuirostris*, *Emu* **82**, 226-227.
- MORGAN, W. L. and RITZ, D. A., 1982; Comparison of the Feeding Apparatus in the Muttonbird, *Puffinus tenuirostris* (Temminck) and the Fairy Prion, *Pachyptila turtur* (Kuhl) in Relation to the Capture of the Krill, *Nyctiphanes australis* Sars, *Journal of Experimental Marine Biology and Ecology* **59**, 61-75.
- MULVANEY, D. J., 1989; *Encounters in Place, Outsiders and Aboriginal Australians 1606-1985*, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia.
- MURIE, O. J., 1959; Fauna of the Aleutian Islands and Alaskan Peninsula, *North American Fauna* **61**, 1-364.
- MURRAY, M. D., 1991; Editorial — Life Histories, *Corella* **15**, 44.
- MURRAY, P., WALLACE, A., and GOEDE, A., 1982; Prehistoric Human Remains from an Islet in the Bass Strait, *Archaeology in Oceania* **17**, 83-89.
- MURRAY-SMITH, S., 1973; Beyond the Pale: the Islander Community of Bass Strait in the Nineteenth Century, *Tasmanian Historical Research Association Papers and Proceedings* **20**, 167-200.
- MURRAY-SMITH, S. (ed.), 1979; *Mission to the Islands: The Missionary Voyages in Bass Strait of Canon Marcus Brownrigg, 1872-1885*; Cat and Fiddle Press, Hobart.
- MURRAY-SMITH, S., 1986; Three Islands: a Case Study in Survival, *Melbourne Studies in Education* 1986, 209-224.
- MYKYTOWYCZ, R., 1963; "Limey-bird Disease" in Chicks of the Tasmanian Muttonbird (*Puffinus tenuirostris*), *Avian Diseases* **7**, 67-69.
- NAARDING, J. A., 1979; Study of the Short-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus tenuirostris* in Tasmania, *Special Report Tasmania National Parks and Wildlife Service and Australia National Parks and Wildlife Service*, Hobart.

- NAARDING, J. A., 1980; Study of the Short-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus tenuirostris* in Tasmania, *Special Report Tasmania National Parks and Wildlife Service and Australia National Parks and Wildlife Service*, Hobart.
- NAARDING, J. A., 1981; Study of the Short-tailed Shearwater, *Puffinus tenuirostris* in Tasmania, *Tasmania National Parks and Wildlife Service Technical Report 3*, Hobart.
- NAGLE, J. C., 1988; in J. C. DANN (ed.), *The Nagle Journal*; Weidenfeld and Nicolson, New York.
- NELSON, T. H., 1907; *The Birds of Yorkshire*, Volume 2; A. Brown & Sons Ltd., London.
- NELSON, J. B., 1978; *The Gannet*; T. and A. D. Poyser, Berkhamsted.
- NISHIGAI, M., SAEKI, Y., ISHITANI, R., SUGIMORI, F., ISHIBASHI, Y., OKA, N. and NAKAMA, A., 1981; Pathological Investigations on Cause of Death in Slender-billed Shearwater Collected in Johgashima Area, *Journal of Yamashina Institute Ornithology* **13**, 228-235 (In Japanese, English abstract).
- NIXON, F. R., 1857; *The Cruise of the Beacon: A Narrative of a Visit to the Islands in Bass's Straits, with Illustrations...*; Bell and Daldy, London.
- NORREVANG, A., 1986; Traditions of Sea Bird Fowling in the Faroes: an Ecological Basis for Sustained Fowling, *Ornis Scandinavica* **17**, 275-281.
- O'CONNOR, S., 1982; Bi-coastal: an Interpretation of a Hunter Island Midden, in S. BOWDLER (ed.), *Coastal Archaeology in Eastern Australia*; Department of Prehistory, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, Canberra, 133-140.
- O'CONNOR, S., 1992; The Timing and Nature of Prehistoric Island Use in Northern Australia, *Archaeology in Oceania* **27**, 49-60.

- OGI, H., 1984; Seabird Mortality Incidental to the Japanese Salmon Gill-net Fishery, in J. P. CROXALL, P. G. H. EVANS and R. W. SCHREIBER (eds.), *Status and Conservation of the World's Seabirds*; International Council for Bird Preservation Technical Publication Number 2, Cambridge, 717-721.
- OGI, H., KUBODERA, T. and NAKAMURA, K., 1980; The Pelagic Feeding Ecology of the Short-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus tenuirostris* in the Subarctic Pacific Region, *Journal of Yamashina Institute Ornithology* 12, 19-44.
- OKA, N., 1989; Chick Growth and Development of the Short-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus tenuirostris* in Tasmania, *Journal of Yamashina Institute Ornithology* 21, 193-207.
- OKA, N. and MARUYAMA, N., 1986; Mass Mortality of Short-tailed Shearwaters along the Japanese Coast, *Tori* 34, 97-104.
- OLSON, S. L., 1982; Biological Archaeology in the West Indies, *Florida Anthropologist* 35, 162-168.
- OLSON, S. L., 1985; The Fossil Records of Birds, in D. S. FARNER, J. R. KING and K. C. PARKES (eds.), *Avian Biology* 8; Academic Press, New York, 80-238.
- ORCHISTON, D. W. and GLENIE, R. C., 1978; Residual Holocene Populations in Bassinia: Aboriginal Man at Palana, Northern Flinders Island, *Australian Archaeological Association Newsletter* 8, 127-141.
- PASCO, C., 1897; *A Roving Commission*; George Robertson and Co., Melbourne.
- PLOMLEY, N. J. B., in G. A. Robinson 1966; *Friendly Mission: The Tasmanian Journals and Papers of George Augustus Robinson 1829-1834*, N. J. B. PLOMLEY (ed.); Tasmanian Historical Research Association, Hobart.
- PLOMLEY, N. J. B., 1976; *A Word-list of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Languages*; Author and State of Tasmania, Launceston.

- PLOMLEY, N. J. B., in G. A. Robinson 1987; *Weep in Silence. A History of the Flinders Island Aboriginal Settlement: With the Flinders Island Journal of George Augustus Robinson 1835-1839*, N. J. B. PLOMLEY (ed.); Blubber Head Press, Hobart.
- PLOMLEY, B. and HENLEY, K. A., 1990; The Sealers of Bass Strait and the Cape Barren Island Community, *Tasmanian Historical Research Association Papers and Proceedings* **37**, 37-127.
- PORTENKO, L. A., 1981; *Birds of the Chukchi Peninsula and Wrangel Island*, Volume 1; Akademy Nauka Leningrad, Leningrad, 66-70.
- PYBUS, C., 1991; *Community of Thieves*; Heinemann, Melbourne.
- PURDY, J. S., 1900; Tuberculosis and Feeding with Mutton Birds, *Australian Medical Gazette* (November 20), 469-470.
- RAINBIRD, W., in P. Y. BUCKBY 1984; *Around Circular Head*; Denbar Publishers, n. p. (Tasmania), 80.
- REBER, G., 1965; Aboriginal Carbon Dates from Tasmania, *Mankind* **6**, 264-268.
- REILLY, P. N., 1977; Seabird Islands No. 45. Gabo Island, Victoria, *Corella* **1**, 51-53.
- RICH, P. V. and VAN TETS, G. F., 1982; Fossil birds of Australia and New Guinea: their Biogeographic, Phylogenetic and Biostratigraphic Input, in P. V. RICH and E. M. THOMPSON (eds.), *The Fossil Vertebrate Record of Australasia*; Monash University Offset Printing Unit, Clayton, Melbourne, 235-384.
- RICHDALE, L. E., 1948; *Maori and Mutton-bird*; Author, Dunedin.
- ROBERTSON, C. J. R. and BELL, B. D., 1984; Seabirds Status and Conservation in the New Zealand Region, in J. P. CROXALL, P. G. H. EVANS and R. W. SCHREIBER (eds.), *Status and Conservation of the World's Seabirds*; International Council for Bird Preservation Technical Publication Number **2**, Cambridge, 573-586.

- ROBINSON, G. A., 1966; *Friendly Mission: The Tasmanian Journals and Papers of George Augustus Robinson 1829-1834*, N. J. B. PLOMLEY (ed.); Tasmanian Historical Research Association, Hobart.
- ROBINSON, G. A., 1987; *Weep in Silence: A History of the Flinders Island Aboriginal Settlement. With the Flinders Island Journal of George Augustus Robinson 1835-1839*, N. J. B. PLOMLEY (ed.); Blubber Head Press, Hobart.
- ROBINSON, M. and GHOSTKEEPER, E., 1987; Native and local economics: a consideration of economic evolution and the next economy, *Arctic* **40**, 138-144.
- ROBSON, L. L., 1983; *A History of Tasmania*, Volume I; Oxford University Press, Melbourne.
- ROBSON, L. L., 1991; *A History of Tasmania*, Volume 2; Oxford University Press, Melbourne.
- ROCHFORD, D. J., 1957; The Identification and Nomenclature of the Surface Water Masses in the Tasman Sea (Data to the end of 1954), *Australian Journal of Marine and Freshwater Research* **8**, 369-413.
- ROE, M. (ed.), 1967; *The Journal and Letters of Captain Charles Bishop on the North-West Coast of America, in the Pacific and in New South Wales 1794-1799*; Hakluyt Society, Cambridge.
- ROLLS, E., 1969; *They All Ran Wild*; Angus and Robertson, Sydney.
- RYAN, L., 1981; *The Aboriginal Tasmanians*; University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, Brisbane.
- RYAN, L., 1987; The Survivors, *Island Magazine* **32**, 52-57.
- SCARLETT, R. J., 1979; Avifauna and Man, in A. J. ANDERSON (ed.), *Birds of a Feather: Essays in Honour of R. J. Scarlet*; British Archaeological Report (International Series) **62**, 75-90.

- SCHODDE, R., FULLAGAR, P. and HERMES, N., 1983; *A Review of Norfolk Island Birds: Past and Present*; Australia National Parks and Wildlife Service Special Publication 8, Canberra.
- SCOTT, C. H., 1987; The Socio-economic Significance of Waterfowl among Canada's Aboriginal Cree: Native Use and Local Management, in A. W. DIAMOND and F. L. FILION (eds.), *The Value of Birds*; International Council for Bird Preservation Technical Publication Number 6, Cambridge, 49-62.
- SCULTHORPE, H., 1978; Land Rights and the Tasmanian Labor Government, in GABY and MARION [no surnames] (eds.), *Racism in Tasmania*; Australian Union of Students, Carlton, Victoria, 5-6.
- SCULTHORPE, H., 1980; *Tasmanian Aborigines: a Perspective for the 1980's*; Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, Hobart.
- SERJEANTSON, D., 1988; Archaeological and Ethnographic Evidence for Seabird Exploitation in Scotland, *Archaeozoologia* 2, 209-224.
- SERVENTY, D. L., 1953; Movements of Pelagic Sea-birds in the Mid-Pacific Region, *Proceedings of Seventh Pacific Science Congress* 4, 394-406.
- SERVENTY, D. L., 1956; A Japanese Recovery of an Australian-ringed *Puffinus tenuirostris*, *Ibis* 98, 316.
- SERVENTY, D. L., 1957; The Banding Programme on *Puffinus tenuirostris* (Temminck). I. First Report, *CSIRO Wildlife Research* 2, 51-59.
- SERVENTY, D. L., 1958; Recent Studies on the Tasmanian Mutton-bird, *Australian Museum Magazine* 12, 327-332.
- SERVENTY, D. L., 1961; The Banding Programme on *Puffinus tenuirostris* (Temminck). II. Second Report, 1956-1960, *CSIRO Wildlife Research* 6, 42-55.
- SERVENTY, D. L., 1963; Egg-laying Timetable of the Slender-billed Shearwater, *Puffinus tenuirostris*, *Proceedings of Thirteenth International Ornithological Congress*, 338-343.

- SERVENTY, D. L., 1967; Aspects of the Population Ecology of the Short-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus tenuirostris*, *Proceedings of Fourteenth International Ornithological Congress*, 165-190.
- SERVENTY, D. L., 1974; The Biology behind the Mutton-bird Industry, *Papers and Proceedings Royal Society of Tasmania* **107**, 1-9.
- SERVENTY, D. L., 1977; Seabird Islands. No. 49. Fisher Island, Tasmania, *Corella* **1**, 60-62.
- SERVENTY, D. L. and CURRY, P. J., 1984; Observations on Colony Size, Breeding Success, Recruitment and Inter-colony Dispersal in a Tasmanian Colony of Short-tailed Shearwaters *Puffinus tenuirostris* over a 30-year Period, *Emu* **84**, 71-79.
- SERVENTY, D. L., SERVENTY, V. and WARHAM, J., 1971; *The Handbook of Australian Sea-birds*; A. H. and A. W. Reed, Sydney.
- SERVENTY, D. L., GUNN, B. M., SKIRA, I. J., BRADLEY, J. S. and WOOLLER, R. D., 1989; Fledgling Translocation and Philopatry in a Seabird, *Oecologia* **81**, 428-429.
- SHARLAND, M., 1956; Population Rise in Two Sea-birds, *Emu* **56**, 75-79.
- SHARPE, R. B., 1906; *The History of the Collections contained in the Natural History Departments of the British Museum. Birds*. Volume 2; Department of Zoology, British Museum, London.
- SHUNTOV, V. P., 1974; *Seabirds and the Biological Structure of the Ocean*; United States Department of Commerce National Information Services, Springfield, United States.
- SIM, R., 1989; *Flinders Island Prehistoric Land Use Survey*; Report to the National Estate Grants Programme on behalf of the Tasmanian Archaeological Society, Hobart.
- SKIRA, I. J., 1979; Underwater Feeding by Short-tailed Shearwaters, *Emu* **79**, 43.

- SKIRA, I. J., 1986; Food of the Short-tailed Shearwater, *Puffinus tenuirostris*, in Tasmania, *Australian Wildlife Research* **13**, 481-488.
- SKIRA, I. J., 1987; Socio-economic Aspects of Muttonbirding in Tasmania, Australia, in A. W. DIAMOND and F. L. FILION (eds.), *The Value of Birds*; International Council for Bird Preservation Technical Publication Number 6, Cambridge, 63-75.
- SKIRA, I. J., 1990; Human Exploitation of the Short-tailed Shearwater, *Papers and Proceedings Royal Society of Tasmania* **124**, 77-90.
- SKIRA, I., 1991; Australasian Bird Reviews — Number 3. The Short-tailed Shearwater; A Review of its Biology, *Corella* **15**, 45-52.
- SKIRA, I., 1994; C. H. Smith and Co., of Launceston, a Muttonbird Buyer, *Tasmanian Historical Research Association Papers and Proceedings* **41**, 163-176.
- SKIRA, I. J. and BROTHERS, N. P. B., 1988a; Seabird Islands No. 183. Little Green Island, Furneaux Group, Tasmania, *Corella* **12**, 80-81.
- SKIRA, I. J. and BROTHERS, N. P. B., 1988b; Seabird Islands No. 184. Great Dog Island, Furneaux Group, Tasmania, *Corella* **12**, 82-84.
- SKIRA, I. J. and WAPSTRA, J. E., 1980; Occupation of Burrows as a Means of Estimating the Harvest of Short-tailed Shearwaters in Tasmania, *Emu* **80**, 233-238.
- SKIRA, I. J., WAPSTRA, J. E., TOWNEY, G. N. and NAARDING, J. A., 1986; Conservation of the Short-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus tenuirostris* in Tasmania, Australia, *Biological Conservation* **37**, 225-236.
- SMITH, J., 1985; C. H. Smith Centenary, *Professional Fisherman* **7** (May), 39-41.
- SPROTT, G., 1900; Cause and Prevention of Typhoid Fever, with Special Reference to the Proposed Metropolitan Drainage Scheme of Hobart, *Papers and Proceedings Royal Society of Tasmania*, ix-xii.
- STEPHENS, E., 1898. The Tasmanian Half-Castes of the Furneaux Islands, *Journal of Manchester Geographical Society* **14**, 355-360.

- STOKES, J. L., 1846; *Discoveries in Australia: with an Account of the Coasts and Rivers Explored and Surveyed during the Voyage of H. M. S. Beagle, in the Years 1837-38-39-40-41-42-43*; T. and W. Boone, London.
- STRAYER, D., GLITZENSTEIN, J. S., JONES, C. G., KOLASA, J., LIKENS, G. E., McDONNELL, M. J., PARKER, G. G. and PICKETT, S. T. A., 1986; *Long-term Ecological Studies: an Illustrated Account of their Design, Operation, and Importance to Ecology*; Institute of Ecosystem Studies Occasional Publication Number 2, Millbrook, New York.
- STRESEMANN, E., 1953; Additions and Corrections to "Birds Collected in the North Pacific Area during Capt. James Cook's Last Voyage" ('Ibis' 1949 : 244-255), *Ibis* 95, 371.
- SUTHERLAND, F. L., 1973; The Geological Development of the Southern Shores and Islands of Bass Strait, *Proceedings Royal Society of Victoria* 85, 133-144.
- SUTTON, D. G., 1979; Island and Coastal Fowling Strategies of the Prehistoric Moriori in A. J. ANDERSON (ed.), *Birds of a Feather: Essays in Honour of R. J. Scarlett*; British Archaeological Report (International Series) 62, 123-140.
- SUTTON, D., 1986; Review of Coastal Southwest Tasmania: the Prehistory of Louisa Bay and Maatsuyker Island by R. Vanderwal and D. Horton, *Archaeology In Oceania* 21, 149-152.
- SUTTON, D. G. and MARSHALL, Y. M., 1980; Coastal Hunting in the Subantarctic Zone, *New Zealand Journal of Archaeology* 2, 25-49.
- TAUSSIG, M., 1977; The Genesis of Capitalism amongst a South American Peasantry: Devil's Labor and the Baptism of Money, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 19, 130-155.
- TAYLOR, H. G., 1973; *The Discovery of Tasmania*; Cat and Fiddle Press, Hobart.
- TEMMINCK, C. J., 1835; *Nouveau Recueil de Planches Coloriees d'Oiseaux*, Volume 5, Plate 587 and full text; F. G. Levrault, Paris.

- TINDALE, N. B., 1953; Growth of a People: Formation and Development of a Hybrid Aboriginal and White Stock on the Islands of Bass Strait, Tasmania, 1815-1949, *Records of Queen Victoria Museum, Launceston, New Series Number 2*, 1-64.
- TOWNEY, G. N. and SKIRA, I. J., 1985a; Seabird Islands No. 139. Babel Island, Furneaux Group, Tasmania, *Corella* **8**, 103-104.
- TOWNEY, G. N. and SKIRA, I. J., 1985b; Seabird Islands No. 143. Trefoil Island, Tasmania, *Corella* **8**, 111-112.
- USHER, P.J. and WENZEL, G., 1987; Native Harvest Surveys and Statistics: a Critique of their Constitution and Use, *Arctic* **40**, 145-160.
- VAN TETS, G. F., 1978; Pleistocene Cave Material of Tasmanian Native-hen *Tribonyx mortierii* and Sooty shearwater *Puffinus griseus* in Tasmania, *Records of Queen Victoria Museum, Launceston* **59**, 1-4.
- VANDERWAL, R. L., 1979; Pre-history and the Archaeology of Louisa Bay, in H. GEE and J. FENTON (eds.), *The South West Book: A Tasmanian Wilderness*; Australian Conservation Foundation, Melbourne, 17-21.
- VANDERWAL, R. L. and HORTON, D., 1984; Coastal Southwest Tasmania, *Terra Australis* **9**.
- VENIAMINOV, I., 1984; Notes on the Islands of the Unalashka District, *Alaska History* **27**.
- WARHAM, J., 1960; Some Aspects of Breeding Behaviour in the Short-tailed Shearwater, *Emu* **60**, 75-87.
- WARHAM, J., 1990; *The Petrels*; Academic Press, London.
- WARHAM, J., WATTS, R. and DAINITY, R. J., 1976; The Composition, Energy Content and Function of the Stomach Oils of Petrels (Order, Procellariiformes), *Journal of Experimental Marine Biology and Ecology* **23**, 1-13.

- WARNECKE, R. M., 1982; The Distributions and Abundance of Seals in the Australasian Region, with Summaries of Biology and Current Research, in *Mammals in the Sea*, Volume 4; Food and Agricultural Organization Fisheries Series Number 5, Rome, 431-475.
- WENDT, S. and COOCH, F. G., 1984; The Kill of Murres in Newfoundland in the 1977-78, 1978-79, and 1979-80 Hunting Seasons, *Canadian Wildlife Service Progress Notes* **146**, 1-10.
- WEST, I., 1984; *Pride against Prejudice*; Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra.
- WHINRAY, J. S., 1981; Barilla Production and Early Soap, in D. J. CARR (ed.), *Plants and Man in Australia*; Academic Press, London, 281-296.
- WHITE, G., 1980; *Islands of South West Tasmania*; Author, Sydney.
- WILLIAMSON, K., 1945; The Economic Importance of Sea-Fowl in the Faroe Islands, *Ibis* **87**, 249-269.
- WILSON, E., 1979; *Titi Heritage: The Story of the Muttonbird Islands*; Craigs, Invercargill.
- WOOLLER, R. D., BRADLEY, J. S., SERVENTY, D. L. and SKIRA, I. J., 1988; Factors Contributing to Reproductive Success in Short-tailed Shearwaters, *Proceedings of Nineteenth International Ornithological Congress*, 848-856.
- WOOLLER, R. D., BRADLEY, J. S., SKIRA, I. J. and SERVENTY, D. L., 1989; Short-tailed Shearwater, in I. NEWTON (ed.), *Lifetime Reproduction in Birds*; Academic Press, London, 405-417.
- WOOLLER, R. D., BRADLEY, J. S., SKIRA, I. J. and SERVENTY, D. L., 1990; Reproductive Success of Short-tailed Shearwaters *Puffinus tenuirostris* in Relation to their Age and Breeding Experience, *Journal of Animal Ecology* **59**, 161-170.
- WORRELL, E., 1958; *Song of the Snake*; Angus & Robertson, Sydney.

YESNER, D. R., 1976; Aleutian Island Albatrosses: a Population History, *Auk* **93**, 263-280.

TASMANIAN PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS

1861 Number 38. GUANO. Correspondence between the Executive Government, the Survey Department, Dr. Crowther, and Mr. Askunas.

1862 Number 17. Letter from the Venerable Archdeacon Reibey, on the Subject of the Half-caste Islanders in the Straits.

1863 Number 48. Half-caste Islanders in Bass's Straits: Report of the Ven. Archdeacon Reibey.

1879 Number 56. Bass's Straits: Report of Dr. Vines upon the Fever in the Islands.

1881 Number 44. Finance, 1880.

1887 Number 62. Report on Flinders Island, by John W. Brown, Surveyor.

1890 Number 66. Survey Department: Annual Report for 1889.

1894-95 Number 39. Department of Lands and Surveys: Report of Surveyor-General and Secretary for Lands for 1894.

1903 Number 31. Report of the Department of Lands and Surveys for 1902-1903.

1908 Number 57. Furneaux Islands: Report upon the State of the Islands, the Condition and Mode of Living of the Half-castes, the Existing Methods of Regulating the Reserves, and Suggesting Lines for Future Administration: By Mr. J. E. C. Lord, Commissioner of Police.

1910 Number 22. Report of the Department of Lands and Surveys for 1909-1910.

1911 Number 28. Statistics for the Year 1910-11.

1912 Number 39. Engineer-in-Chief: Report for 1911-12.

- 1913 Number 33. Department of Public Health. Annual Report for 1912-13.
- 1915 Number 22. Department of Lands and Surveys: Report for 1914-15.
- 1918 Number 34. The Report of the Surveyor-General on the Department of Lands and Surveys for 1917-18.
- 1922 Number 24. The Report of the Surveyor-General on the Department of Lands and Surveys. Report for 1921-22.
- 1924 Number 48. Furneaux Islands Half-castes: Report of Select Committee.
- 1937 Number 18. Report of the Secretary for Lands for 1936-37.
- 1938 Number 13. Report of the Secretary for Lands for 1937-38.
- 1942 Number 15. Report of the Surveyor-General and Secretary for Lands for 1941-42.
- 1943 Number 17. Report of the Surveyor-General and Secretary for Lands for 1942-43.
- 1942-43 Number 30. Social Services and Children of the State Department.
- 1947 Number 13. Report of the Surveyor-General and Secretary for Lands for 1946-47.
- 1948 Number 22. Conditions in Flinders Island Municipality.
- 1948 Number 25. Report of the Surveyor-General and Secretary for Lands for 1947-48.
- 1949 Number 38. Report of the Surveyor-General and Secretary for Lands for 1948-49.
- 1951 Number 30. Report of the Surveyor-General and Secretary for Lands for 1950-51.
- 1953 Number 22. Report of the Surveyor-General and Secretary for Lands for 1952-53.
- 1968 Number 15. Report of the Committee appointed by the State Government to examine Several Matters concerned with the future Development of Flinders Island..
- 1978 Number 94. Report of the Aboriginal Affairs Study Group of Tasmania.

ACTS OF PARLIAMENT

Tasmania

6 William IV No. 15. Commandant of Flinder's Island may act as Justice of the Peace.
Removal from Islands in Bass's Straits of Persons Trespassing, 1836.

19 Victoria I No. 28. The Master and Servant Act, 1856.

26 Victoria I No. 5. Repeal of Certain Acts, 1863.

34 Victoria I No. 10. Waste Lands Act, 1870.

59 Victoria I No. 26. Game Protection Act, 1895.

2 Edward VII No. 21. Game Protection Amendment Act, 1902.

3 Edward VII No. 37. Public Health Act, 1903.

6 Edward VII No. 31. Local Government Act, 1906.

7 Edward VII No. 53. Game Protection Act, 1907.

2 George V No. 64. Crown Lands Act, 1911.

3 George V No. 16. Cape Barren Island Reserve Act, 1912.

10 George V No. 56. Animals and Birds Protection Act, 1919.

19 George V No. 51. Animals and Birds Protection Act, 1928.

26 George V No. 35. Crown Lands Act, 1935.

26 George V No. 43. Public Health Act, 1935.

9 George VI No. 14. Cape Barren Island Reserve Act, 1945.

12 George VI No. 33. Prices Act, 1948.

14 George VI No. 34. Cape Barren Island Reserve Act, 1950.

7 Elizabeth II No. 36. Statute Law Revision Act, 1958.

19 Elizabeth II No. 47. National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1970.

25 Elizabeth II No. 2. Tasmanian Museum Act, 1976.

Commonwealth

3 George VI No. 15. National Security Act, 1939.

16 Elizabeth II No. 55. Constitution Alteration (Aboriginal) Act, 1967.

32 Elizabeth II No. 149. Wildlife Protection (Regulation of Exports and Imports) Act, 1982.

39 Elizabeth II No. 150. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission Act, 1989.

THESES

BOWDLER, S., 1970; Bass Point: The Excavation of a South-east Australian Shell Midden showing Cultural and Economic Change, B. A. (Honours) Thesis; University of Sydney, Sydney.

BOWDLER, S., 1979; Hunter Hill, Hunter Island, Ph. D. Thesis; Australian National University, Canberra.

FITZHERBERT, K., 1985; The Role of Energetic Factors in the Evolution of the Breeding Biology of the Short-tailed Shearwater (*Puffinus tenuirostris* Temminck), Ph. D. Thesis; Monash University, Melbourne.

GAUGHWIN, D., 1979; A Bird in the Sand: an Investigation of Muttonbirds, other Seabirds and Water Fowl in Recent Prehistoric South-east Australia, B. A. (Honours) Thesis; Australian National University, Canberra.

HART, P. R., 1963; The Church of England under Bishop Montgomery, M. A. Thesis; University of Tasmania, Hobart.

MORGAN, A. T., 1986; Aboriginal Education in the Furneaux Islands (1798-1986), M. Education Thesis; University of Tasmania, Hobart.

O'CONNOR, S., 1980; Bringing it All Back Home: an Analysis of the Vertebrate Faunal Remains from the Stockyard Site, Hunter Island, North-West Tasmania, B. A. (Honours) Thesis; University of New England, Armidale.

MANUSCRIPT MATERIAL

Archives Office of Tasmania, Hobart

CSD 7/14/2 Chairman of Board of Education to Colonial Secretary, 3 June 1871.

CSD 7/33/450 Brownrigg to Colonial Secretary, 11 March 1872.

CSD 7/45/833 Lieutenant-Governor Du Cane to Colonial Secretary, 14 August 1871.

CSD 8/2/833[1] Henry Collis to Colonial Secretary, 24 February 1873.

[2] Colonial Secretary to Superintendent of Police, 28 March 1873.

CSD 10/6 Register of Correspondence, Colonial Secretary's Office.

CSD 10/6/89[1] George Everett to George Town Police, 6 July 1875.

[2] Simpson, George Town Police to Inspector of Police, Hobart Town, 11 August 1875.

[3] Petition from Aborigines on Chappell Island asking for police protection to Colonial Secretary, 9 April 1877.

[4] Colonial Secretary to Brownrigg, 25 June 1877.

[5] Brownrigg to Colonial Secretary Reibey, 12 July 1877.

[6] George Town Police Investigation to Inspector of Police, 27 October 1877.

[7] Brownrigg to Chairman of Board of Education, 22 January 1879.

CSD 11/1/790 Bishop Bromby to Colonial Secretary, 19 June 1876.

CSD 13/16/168 School Attendance Lists for CBI, 1871.

CSD 22/336/104[35/29] A. W. Burbury Report, 16 September 1929.

CSO 1/131/3165 Superintendent of Police, Launceston, to Colonial Secretary, 3 October 1825.

CSO 1/576/185/13061 James Monro [*sic*] to Colonial Secretary, 18 January 1832.

CSO 5/142/3432 Lamb to Major Ryan, Commandant, 12 January 1838.

CSO 24/66 Report of Surveyor-General Power on islands in Bass Strait, 1848.

CSO 25/2/3021 Thomas Beedon to Colonial Secretary, 22 March 1849.

LSD 1/4/49 Memorandum of lease of Flinders Island to Malcolm Laing Smith, n. d.
 LSD 1/4/111 Milligan to Colonial Secretary, 15 October 1847, 17 April 1849.
 LSD 1/31/617 G. Everett to Surveyor-General, 15 July 1870.
 LSD 1/39/153 Thomas Mansell to Surveyor-General, 8 December 1869.
 LSD 1/50/430 Surveyor-General Calder to Colonial Treasurer, 24 December 1860.
 LSD 1/51/355 Colonial Secretary Bicheno to Surveyor-General Power, 19 July 1848.
 LSD 1/51/359 Colonial Secretary Bicheno to Surveyor-General Power, 19 July 1848.
 LSD 1/51/361 Surveyor-General Power to Colonial Secretary Bicheno, 12 March 1849.
 LSD 1/51/365 Surveyor-General Power to Colonial Secretary, 24 August 1854.
 LSD 1/51/371 Surveyor-General Power's Report of Visit to the Islands, October 1854.
 LSD 1/51/378 Surveyor-General Power to Colonial Secretary, 13 December 1854.
 LSD 1/51/441 Thomas Beedon to Surveyor-General Power, 21 July 1848.
 LSD 1/51/442 Colonial Secretary Bicheno to Surveyor-General Power, 26 March 1849.
 LSD 1/51/459 George Everett to Surveyor-General Calder, 30 November 1869.
 LSD 1/51/465 Surveyor-General Calder to Colonial Treasurer, 19 February 1868.
 LSD 1/51/471 Ronald Gunn to Colonial Treasurer, 13 February 1868.
 LSD 1/51/532 Surveyor-General to Chief Police Magistrate, 25 August 1857.
 LSD 1/51/634 Maxwell to Surveyor-General, 19 January 1866.
 LSD 1/51/636 Fereday to Surveyor-General, 2 September 1862.
 LSD 1/51/642 Fereday to Surveyor-General Calder, 20 September 1864.
 LSD 1/51/644 Boothman to Fereday, 23 May 1865.
 LSD 1/51/646 Fereday to Boothman, 21 April 1865.
 LSD 1/51/652 Reibey to Surveyor-General, 4 April 1862.
 LSD 1/52/252, Colonial Secretary's Office to Surveyor-General, 21 August 1846.
 LSD 1/53/619 Benvenuto Smith to Surveyor-General, 26 June 1866.
 LSD 1/53/621-623 Surveyor-General Calder to Survey Office, 14 February 1868.
 LSD 1/69/270-299 Askunas and Crowther to Surveyor-General, correspondence regarding guano deposits on islands, 1861.
 LSD 1/69/326 Simmons to Surveyor-General, 18 January 1861.
 LSD 1/69/327 Crowther to Surveyor-General, applies for islands, 23 March 1861.
 LSD 1/70/67 Colonial Secretary to Malcolm Laing Smith, 4 June 1836.
 LSD 1/462 [1] Minister for Lands and Works to Barrett, 24 July 1919.
 [2] Constable Mansfield to Department of Lands and Surveys, 22 June 1921.
 LSD 2/2/838 Surveyor-General to Hamilton Allen, 6 January 1860.
 LSD 2/2/924 Fereday to Surveyor-General, 9 December 1862.
 LSD 2/2/926 Surveyor-General to G. A. Robinson Jr., 2 March 1863.
 LSD 2/3/102 B. Smith to Surveyor-General, 11 November 1867.
 LSD 2/3/307 Richard Maynard to Surveyor-General, 23 December, 1852.

LSD 2/3/765 J. MacLaine to Surveyor-General, 17 August 1863.

LSD 2/3/852 Surveyor-General to Colonial Secretary, 24 December 1860.

LSD 2/3/888 Applications to purchase islands, December 1860-February 1861.

LSD 2/3/889 Crowther to Surveyor-General, applies for islands, April-May 1861.

LSD 2/3/890 Crowther to Surveyor-General, applies for North Breaksea Island, 10 January 1859.

LSD 2/3/891 Crowther to Surveyor-General, deposit fees on islands, 10 August 1861.

LSD 2/3/1002 B. Smith to Surveyor-General, 11 November 1867.

LSD 2/3/1005 Fereday to Surveyor-General, 27 February 1868.

LSD 2/3/1035/6038 Tenders for Flinders Island, April and March 1862.

LSD 2/4/51/6151[1] Solicitor-General to George Everett, 16 April 1872.

[2] George Everett to Surveyor-General, 15 May 1872.

[3] Solicitor-General to Benvenuto Smith, 20 May 1872.

[4] Benvenuto Smith to Surveyor-General, 12 August 1872.

LSD 2/4/54/6158[1] George Everett to Surveyor-General, 8 December 1871.

[2] James Everett to Surveyor-General, 27 December 1871.

[3] Lucy Beedon to Surveyor-General, 22 November 1875.

[4] Petition from Half-castes to Surveyor-General, 10 January 1877.

[5] Solicitor-General to Half-castes, 9 November 1877.

[6] Petition from Half-castes to Surveyor-General, 14 December 1878.

LSD 16/41/724 Memorandum from Deputy Commissioner of Crown Land, 25 September 1879.

LSD 16/43/962 Memorandum from Deputy Commissioner of Crown Land to Inspector of Police, 5 May 1880.

LSD 16/71/205 Surveyor-General to Allan Smith, 20 June 1888.

LSD 16/71/397 Surveyor-General to James Holt, 7 July 1888.

LSD 51[1] Report of Dr Gaha, Minister for Health, June 1930.

[2] Chairman, J. S. Needham of Australian Board of Mission to Attorney-General, 24 December 1930.

[3] Minister for Lands and Works to Minister for Forests, 5 May 1938.

[4] Constable Croswell to Secretary for Lands, 4 March 1940.

[5] Minister for Health to Minister for Lands, 5 September 1940.

[6] Minister for Lands to Minister for Health, 10 September 1940.

[7] Carl Jensen to Headmaster of CBI School, 9 December 1940.

[8] Crown Land Bailiff on CBI to Secretary for Lands, 16 December 1940.

[9] Secretary for Lands to Carl Jensen, 18 December 1940.

[10] J. R. Breaden, Storekeeper at CBI to Secretary for Lands, 12 August 1941.

- [11] Surveyor-General and Secretary for Lands to W. D. and H. O. Wills and Co., Melbourne, 26 November 1941.
- [12] Surveyor-General and Secretary for Lands to Minister for Lands, 5 February 1942.
- [13] Notes supplied by Mr Meston of Launceston, November 1942.
- [14] Draft Report for Surveyor-General and Secretary for Lands, 9 February 1944.
- [15] Secretary for Lands to Minister for Lands and Works, 12 July 1951.
- LSD 187 Applications to occupy agricultural blocks under the CBI Reserve Act 1912, 1913-1945.
- LSD 187/27AB Julian Clifford Maynard Everett lease; Constable Mansfield to Surveyor-General, 6 July 1922.
- LSD 187/2/98AB George Henry Paul Everett lease; Crown Land Bailiff on CBI to Secretary for Lands, 6 June 1935.
- LSD 188 Applications to occupy homestead blocks under the CBI Reserve Act 1912, 1913-1945.
- LSD 188/6HB James Henry Paul Maynard lease; Crown Land Bailiff Read on CBI to Secretary for Lands, 24 July 1941.
- LSD 188/24HB John Peter Mansell lease; Mansell to Secretary for Lands, 8 August 1917.
- LSD 188/39AB Albert Beeton Everett lease; Everett to Secretary for Lands, 22 November 1915.
- LSD 188/76HB Mary Maynard lease; Crown Land Bailiff on CBI to Secretary for Lands, September 1928.
- LSD 189 Alphabetical Register of applicants to occupy agricultural and homestead blocks on Cape Barren Island under the Reserve Act 1912, c. 1917-1950.
- LSD 209/2/219 John Riddle, lease for Vansittart Island transferred to Elizabeth Bishop from 20 January 1872.
- LSD 209/2/178 Ayde Douglas, lease for Waterhouse Island from 1 June 1859.
- LSD 209/2/202 Charles Harley, lease for part of CBI from 1 August 1859.
- LSD 209/2/224 G. A. Robinson Jr., lease for Woody and Tin Kettle Islands from 1 November 1860.
- LSD 209/2/227 George Everett, lease for Passage Island from 1 December 1860.
- LSD 209/2/259 Abbott and Robert Gardner, lease for Flinders Island from 1 September 1863; Robert Gardner, lease for Flinders Island from 7 January 1865.
- LSD 209/2/413 Robert Gardner, lease for majority of Flinders Island from 30 October 1880.
- LSD 251/135, 137, 139, 140 Journal of receipts and expenditure under the Cape Barren Island Act, April 1939-August 1949.

MB 2/20 Lighthouse returns of men employed January 1879-March 1892.

PCS 1/18/183/17/47 Premier, Robert Cosgrove to A. Brown, Secretary of the Victorian Aboriginal Group, 10 December 1947.

POL 203/1[1] D. Bowman to Saville, Headmaster of CBI School, 17 June 1952.

[2] E. Maynard, Statement, 16 January 1959.

[3] Smith, Director of State Social Services Department to Leonora Mansell, 20 December 1956.

POL 205/1 Police Department Correspondence Book, Whitemark, 25-27 December 1917.

POL 208/1 Police Department Charge Books, Whitemark, 5 May 1918-25 June 1956.

POL 208/2 Police Department Charge Books, Whitemark, 5 November 1957-28 June 1961.

POL 720/1 Police Department Cash Books, Cape Barren Island, 25 October 1920-13 January 1949.

POL 722/1 Police Department Bail Books, Whitemark, 7 March 1921-30 May 1952.

POL 722/8 Police Department Bail Books, Whitemark, 11 March 1961-17 August 1963.

POL 722/1-8 Police Department Bail Books, Whitemark, 7 March 1921-17 August 1963.

British Museum, London

BROWN, R., Journal of Visit to Kent Group, 1803.

Flinders Island Museum, Emita

Thomas Barrett Account Books.

Latrobe Library, Melbourne

MS 11803 Box 2152/5, W. R. Cottam Correspondence.

Mitchell Library, Sydney

A606, Brief Description of 29 Islands in the Furneaux Group (T. Scott, 1828). A manuscript of this publication "taken from the information of James Campbell, boatman, Hobart Town — August, 1828", is catalogued under the same number.

A7071/203, Colonial Secretary's Office to Robinson, 25 February 1839.

B730, Backhouse Journal.

MSS 1248/2, Edward William Stephens: Weather Notes, 18 December 1891.

Private Archives

Dr E. Lawrence, Hobart (Notes on the Life of S. P. H. Martin — by himself; Author, unpublished).

Francis Rhodes, Flinders Island (*Shearwater* Logs).

Nancy Smith, Launceston (C. H. Smith Letter Book; C. H. Smith and Co. files; Sea Packing Company files).

Tasmanian Royal Society, Hobart

RS 40/1, Bladon Papers.

RS 40/3, Stephens Papers. *The Furneaux Islands, their Early Settlement, and some Characteristics of their Inhabitants. From 1790 to 1899* (n. d.).

University of Tasmania, Hobart

W7/1, Walker Papers, Robert Clark to George Washington Walker, 27 May 1846.

INTERVIEWS

Patsy Adam-Smith b. (=born) c. 1925; Mabel Archer b. c. 1905; Walter Bentley b. 1905; Ray Boxer b. c. 1920; Karen Brown b. 1955; Dorothy Cook b. 1921; Cliff Day b. 1910; Tom Diprose b. 1910; Bill Edwards b. 1904; Melvin Everett b. 1930; Furley Gardner b. 1928; Roy Goss b. 1914; Arthur Grant b. 1916; Murray Holloway b. 1935; Keith Holyman b. 1911; Robert Hughes b. 1963; Sharon Hughes b. 1966; Bill King b. 1918; Barbara Langley b. c. 1918; Tom Langley b. 1912; Doug Lowery b. 1933; Connie McDonald b. 1899; Marge Mansell b. 1927; Darcy Maynard b. 1902; Ruth Maynard b. 1929; Fay Newall b. 1942; Herbie Nicholls b. 1911; Phyllis Pitchford b. 1937; Rachel Quillerat b. 1934; David Rhodes b. 1919; Bill Riddle b. 1894; Derek Smith b. 1924; Kim

Stonehouse b. 1948; Pam Stonehouse b. 1951; Bill Thow b. 1908; Leila Virieux b. 1919; Leedham Walker b. 1905; Frank Willis b. 1920.

ABBREVIATIONS

ABPB	Animals and Birds Protection Board
AOT	Archives Office of Tasmania
CBI	Cape Barren Island
CSD	Colonial Secretary's Department
CSO	Colonial Secretary's Office
FIC	Flinders Island Council
HRA	Historical Records of Australia
HRNSW	Historical Records of New South Wales
LL	Latrobe Library
LSD	Lands and Surveys Department
MB	Marine Board
ML	Mitchell Library
PCS	Premier and Colonial Secretary
POL	Police
PWH	Department of Parks, Wildlife and Heritage
TPP	Tasmanian Parliamentary Paper
TRE	Treasury
UTA	University of Tasmania Archives

Appendix 1. Population Statistics for Cape Barren Island, 1909-1984. The * shows the number of adults on the electoral roll in the Furneaux Group.

Occupation	Year																				
	1909	1910	1912	1913	1914	1915	1916	1917	1921	1922	1925	1928	1929	1931	1934	1936	1937	1939	1941	1943	1946
Teacher	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1
Policeman	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1											
Prospector			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1										
Miner	1	4	5	5	7	7	9	7	4	2	3	2	1	1	5	4	3	5	4	2	2
Farmer	6	10	11	11	11	11	9	8	11	10	7	6	6	5	6	3	3	2	2	2	1
Grazier						2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	3
Boat Builder	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1										
Carpenter	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	2
Sailor	2	2	1	1	1									2	1	1	1	1			
Cook										1											
Labourer	13	12	12	12	14	16	18	20	23	23	26	22	31	32	33	37	39	40	37	29	25
Hunter	20	21	20	20	19	19	19	18	18	15	14	9	8	8	8	8	8	7	6	5	3
Home Duties	31	37	38	37	39	39	42	45	53	48	43	37	41	45	43	46	49	44	47	31	26
No Occupation												1	2	2	1	2	1	2	3	2	2
Pensioner												1	1	1	1						
Post Mistress																				1	1
Post Master																					
Nurse																					
Missionary																1					
Reserve Supervisor																					
Canteen Assistant																					
Store-keeper																	1	1			
Shop assistant																	1				
Store Manager																		1	1		
Fisherman																			1		
Welfare Officer																					
TOTAL	78	91	93	91	97	100	105	106	119	109	102	84	96	101	103	108	113	108	108	80	68
Number of males	47	54	53	54	58	61	63	61	66	61	59	47	55	56	60	62	64	64	61	49	42
Total number *	219	238	282	295	345	374	383	384	429	451	449	420	430	453	500	485	501	544	513	460	460

(Source: Commonwealth Electoral Rolls)

Appendix 1. Continued.

Occupation	Year																			
	1948	1949	1951	1953	1954	1955	1958	1960	1963	1964	1969	1970	1972	1973	1975	1977	1979	1980	1982	1984
Teacher	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	3	1	2	1		2
Policeman	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1										
Prospector			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1									
Miner	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2											
Farmer	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	3		3
Grazier	3	3	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	1	1	2	1	1			
Carpenter	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1									
Labourer	29	31	36	35	33	30	28	27	20	18	12	12	12	13	14	15	11	9		11
Hunter	3	3	3	2	1	1														
Home Duties	29	30	43	37	36	40	38	33	27	20	19	18	17	18	14	14	15	12		18
No Occupation	2	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	2	4	5	4	4		9
Post Mistress	1	1	1																	
Post Master			1																	
Nurse	1		1				1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	2	2		2
Missionary	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1										
Reserve Supervisor	1		1	1	1	1														
Canteen Assistant					1															
Store Manager	1																			
Fisherman	1										2	1	2	2	3	2	2	2		2
Welfare Officer													1	1						
Handy-man														2	2	2	3	3		4
TOTAL	78	76	103	92	86	85	79	73	61	50	43	38	39	42	43	43	42	36	51	51
Number of males	49	46	60	55	50	45	41	40	34	30	24	20	22	24	29	29	27	24	28	?
Total number *	508	515	509	485	491	512	524	574	567	578	604	574	564	623	629	642	637	622	713	697

Appendix 2. Number of Muttonbird Sheds in the Furneaux Group, 1922-1992.

Year	Little Green	Little Dog	Great Dog	Chappell	Babel	Total
1922	7	4	11	17	24	63
1925	6	4	12	12	22	56
1927	6	4	12	12	18	52
1928	6	4	12	12	24	58
1929	6	3	12	12	24	57
1936	6	3	12	6	24	51
1937	6	3	12	10	25	56
1938	6	3	12	8	25	54
1939	6	3	12	10	26	57
1940	6	3	12	10	26	57
1941	4	3	12	7	16	42
1942	5	3	11	2	12	33
1943	3	3	11	3	16	36
1944	4	3	11	4	15	34
1945	4	3	11	2	14	34
1946	4	3	12	4	17	40
1947	4	3	12	5	15	39
1948	3	3	12	4	15	37
1949	1	0	12	3	14	31
1950	0	0	0	3	14	17
1951	2	3	12	1	15	34
1952	3	3	12	2	18	39
1953	3	2	12	2	17	37
1954	3	3	12	3	15	37
1955	3	3	12	1	15	35
1956	0	2	13	0	11	26
1957	1	2	12	0	11	26
1958	0	2	12	0	9	23
1959	0	2	12	0	6	20
1960	0	2	11	1	4	18
1961	0	2	11	1	2	16
1962	0	3	11	1	3	18
1963	0	1	10	1	1	13

(Source: *Examiner* 22 March 1922; FIC Correspondence Files, 1925-29; AOT AA 612/21-24 and PWH W2/5/7)

Appendix 2. Continued.

Year	Little Green	Little Dog	Great Dog	Chappell	Babel	Total
1964	0	2	11	1	1	15
1965	0	3	9	1	1	14
1966	0	2	10	1	2	15
1967	0	3	9	1	2	15
1968	0	3	10	1	1	15
1969	0	3	9	1	2	15
1970	0	1	6	1	1	9
1971	0	0	7	0	1	8
1972	0	0	7	1	1	9
1973	0	0	8	1	1	10
1974	0	0	8	1	1	11
1975	0	0	7	1	1	9
1976	0	0	8	0	3	12
1977	0	0	8	0	2	10
1978	0	0	5	1	1	7
1979	0	0	6	0	1	7
1980	0	0	7	0	1	8
1981	0	0	7	0	2	9
1982	0	0	7	0	2	9
1983	0	0	7	0	2	9
1984	0	0	8	0	1	9
1985	0	0	7	0	1	8
1986	0	0	7	0	1	8
1987	0	0	4	0	1	5
1988	0	0	7	0	1	8
1989	0	0	7	0	2	9
1990	0	0	7	0	1	8
1991	0	0	7	0	1	8
1992	0	0	8	0	0	8

Appendix 3 Number of Muttonbirds caught in the Furneaux Group, 1925-1992.

Year	Little Green	Little Dog	Great Dog	Chappell	Babel	Total
1925						800,000
1926						800,000
1927						800,000
1928	54,500	60,000	81,000	205,000	299,900	701,000
1929						937,500
1930						800,000
1931						850,000
1932						825,000
1933						750,000
1934						650,000
1935	28,000	20,000	107,000	50,000	215,000	420,000
1936	61,000	45,000	185,000	75,000	370,000	736,000
1937	30,000	44,000	169,000	46,000	353,000	642,000
1938	34,000	52,000	203,000	56,000	413,000	758,000
1939	44,000	53,000	210,000	67,000	400,000	774,000
1940	35,000	39,000	165,000	61,000	365,000	665,000
1941	22,000	43,000	208,000	47,000	174,000	494,000
1942	28,600	45,600	184,000	21,200	154,500	434,700
1943	14,464	26,427	114,257	11,245	181,175	347,568
1944	28,982	40,663	172,707	30,455	199,177	471,984
1945	28,963	36,619	155,184	14,910	182,696	418,372
1946	23,842	26,819	172,380	27,191	172,273	439,150
1947	27,130	36,670	214,452	29,860	215,786	523,898
1948	16,773	31,703	201,233	22,490	232,548	504,747
1949	15,135	36,853	213,195	17,980	152,908	441,071
1950	0	0	0	14,150	149,524	163,874
1951	22,700	31,300	165,190	10,164	209,222	445,556
1952	24,825	31,996	201,772	11,144	211,440	487,707
1953	21,206	22,745	218,035	22,789	220,066	512,937
1954	26,931	36,740	226,880	40,124	242,532	583,038
1955	24,412	29,377	193,067	21,471	195,886	472,638
1956	0	8,912	57,147	0	115,608	181,667
1957	8,682	21,368	153,929	0	128,354	312,333
1958	0	25,794	205,082	0	97,436	328,312
1959	0	21,999	163,404	0	74,481	259,884
1960	0	22,488	148,557	8,000	53,769	232,814
1961	0	24,906	174,282	35,105	46,103	280,398
1962	0	30,517	180,727	24,161	52,289	287,694
1963	0	10,105	117,547	36,577	20,690	184,919

(Source: AOT AA 612/21-24 and PWH W2/5/7)

Appendix 3 Continued.

Year	Little Green	Little Dog	Great Dog	Chappell	Babel	Total
1964	0	20,876	162,959	19,000	21,292	224,125
1965	0	28,288	134,556	25,448	22,697	210,829
1966	0	21,530	135,332	23,761	35,311	215,934
1967	0	32,888	114,184	32,150	62,874	242,096
1968	0	35,047	126,024	48,577	29,428	239,076
1969	0	31,895	109,442	43,008	48,495	232,840
1970	0	11,409	64,790	37,722	24,977	138,898
1971	0	0	46,474	0	33,822	80,296
1972	0	0	87,228	29,141	40,956	157,325
1973	0	0	95,018	39,051	46,262	180,331
1974	0	0	123,366	46,550	40,100	213,516
1975	0	0	89,603	46,000	47,320	185,923
1976	0	0	114,478	0	125,750	243,364
1977	0	0	96,672	0	77,000	176,772
1978	0	0	80,972	0	29,500	113,387
1979	0	0	84,588	0	35,200	119,788
1980	0	0	88,896	0	18,100	106,996
1981	0	0	116,355	0	34,290	150,645
1982	0	0	92,263	0	54,625	146,888
1983	0	0	104,100	0	58,000	162,100
1984	0	0	89,784	0	53,565	143,349
1985	0	0	88,724	0	47,605	136,329
1986	0	0	80,929	0	0	80,929
1987	0	0	17,974	0	2,800	20,774
1988	0	0	68,732	0	22,000	90,732
1989	0	0	56,942	0	35,706	92,648
1990	0	0	68,805	0	3,200	72,005
1991	0	0	83,897	0	0	83,897
1992	0	0	64,059	0	0	64,059

Appendix 4. Number of Muttonbirds caught in the Hunter Group, 1941-1992.

Year	Trefoil	Hunter	Walker	Robbins	Three Hummock	Steep
1941		1,000	5,000	1,000	2,000	
1942	50,000	10,000			10,000	50,000
1943		1,000	5,000	1,000	2,000	
1944			10,000		2,000	
1945		1,500	7,500	500	3,000	
1946		350	12,480	3,850	47,000	
1947						
1948						
1949						
1950						
1951	38,000	6,000	25,500	4,500	45,000	
1952		1,800			1042	
1953	58,000				11,800	
1954	82,091				13,360	
1955	81,522	12,030	18,645	9,030	6,707	
1956	74,111	26,390				
1957						
1958						
1959	87,782	9,000	15,432			
1960						
1961						
1962						
1963						
1964	138,055	10,494				
1965	140,000	29,632			830	300
1966	138,573	21,739	32,970		3,928	
1967	174,748	37,144				
1968	184,931	4,139	38,062			
1969	176,871	41,882	31,285			
1970	175,922	53,103				
1971	203,786	71,583				
1972	170,000	140	47,652		6,400	
1973	195,000	35,582	25,630		600	
1974	198,000	34,775	33,325		14,400	
1975	130,000	1,228	49,910(includes Hunter I. N)		17,200	
1976	174,422	4,200	89,710(includes Hunter I. N)		23,760	12,600
1977	164,210	46,080	19,000		20,250	20,000
1978	131,439	46,700	21,840		23,000	20,000

(Source: AOT AA 612/21-24 and PWH W2/5/7)

Appendix 4. Continued.

Year	Trefoil	Hunter	Walker	Robbins	Three Hummock	Steep
1979	160,253	43,780	24,570		14,000	27,500
1980	118,092	48,680	21,460		12,516	28,000
1981	134,200	15,000	30,100		22,100	17,040
1982	110,250	12,000	39,987		17,000	33,180
1983	134,685	5,600	41,160		35,000	34,100
1984	112,324	14,000	41,546		32,000	24,000
1985	83,210	3,000	42,540		33,500	26,000
1986	91,853	4,000	26,732		27,000	18,500
1987	78,626	36,440	40,150		36,800	23,100
1988	107,124	35,386	25,705		28,300	18,540
1989	60,890	4,620	20,140		22,000	17,340
1990	68,169	2,000	12,800		28,200	18,000
1991	9,000		20,000	3,500	30,500	19,500
1992			23,500		32,500	17,000

Appendix 5. Quantity of By-products Collected from Muttonbirds in the Furneaux Group, 1937-1992.

Year	Oil (l)	Fat (l)	Feathers	Year	Oil (l)	Feathers
1937	24,825		415 bags, 8 bales	1965	2,575	146 bags
1938	20,020	2,202	460 bags	1966	8,422	156 bags
1939	24,024	2,202	505 bags	1967	5,560	110 bags
1940	21,822	5,606	407 bags, 4 bales	1968	3,100	167 bags
1941	11,411	8,609	253 bags, 6 bales	1969	1,500	191 bags
1942	8,609	19,019	252 bags, 13 bales	1970	1,300	no data
1943	6,026	6,026	177 bags, 3 bales	1971	2,500	74 bags
1944	12,813		199 bags	1972	2,500	78 bags, 6 bales
1945	23,023		233 bags	1973	2,500	78 bags, 6 bales
1946	46,046 (oil & fat)		244 bags, 7 bales	1974	2,782	16 bags
1947	61,061 (oil & fat)		15 bags	1975	1,166	59 bags, 7 bales
1948	55,400 (oil & fat)		238 bags	1976	8,127	108 bags
1949	no data but all three collected			1977	2,705	63 bags, 16 bales
1950	no data but all three collected			1978	2,562	77 bags
1951	15,500	6,700	263 chaff bags	1979	4,077	92 bags
1952	11,200	7,200	305 chaff bags	1980	2,077	89 bags
1953	10,500	4,100	317 chaff bags	1981	2,664	110 bags
1954	12,440	9,750	335 chaff bags	1982	2,304	128 bags, 1081 kg
1955	12,850	8,200	339 chaff bags	1983	2,156	140 bags
1956	502	200	115 chaff bags	1984	1,908	127 bags
1957	5,100	200	191 chaff bags	1985	1,669	96 bags
1958	8,175	0	224 chaff bags	1986	204	70 bags
1959	no data			1987	204	11 bags, 202 kg
1960	no data			1988	979	46 bags, 1255 kg
1961	no data			1989	2,682	30 bags, 1393 kg
1962	no data			1990	1,601	22 bags, 949 kg
1963	no data			1991	2,571	43 bags, 1245 kg
1964	22,670	0	137 bags, 2 bales	1992	1,340	no data, but collected

(Source: AOT AA 612/21-24 and PWH W2/5/7)